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MACLEAN'S

MAY
28th
2007

THE BABY SHORTAGE

**HEY
LADY!**
**What will
it take to
make you
breed?**

**Your government
needs to know P.40**



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MACLEAN'S

VOLUME 120 NUMBER 20 MAY 29, 2003 - 5400 PAGES

Rebecca Mead talks to Kenneth Whyte about the moment a bride-to-be finds the perfect wedding gown

Mitchell Rapchael on Michael Igastoff's icy birthday gift; Rahm Jeffers' soccer skills and Rob Roe's strikeouts

Stephane Deth must capitalize on Gilles Duceppe's 44th and last day in Quebec.

Hero-turned-villain Tony Blair's legacy is mixed. But he always put principle first

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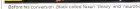
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per-100 women. Canada's fertility rate is roughly 1.5 kids per woman.

WashPost Update Columnist Scott Fauchald hits the humor in industry's headlines: www.washingtonpost.com/feschul

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'Gore's transformation is questionable, but that's better than denial'



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

BEING TO APPREHEND the far-emptied the barren bottled water industry and how it misleads the public ("It's to not cool," Environment, May 14). I was stilled to read about reasons that I have thought of as a drinking bottled water is a better than boycotting? Canada needs a national water policy to protect this precious resource as a basic human right. One day we may live with oil, but we cannot live without water. *Barbara French, Burlington, Ont.*

CONGRATULATIONS on a well-researched article. I'm certain it expressed the heartfelt thoughts of all dedicated municipal employees who strive 24/7 to provide safe, clean water. Now that's not a sin! *A. B. Patterson, retired deputy commissioner, water supply, Thornhill, Ont.*

SEVERAL FACTS need to be clarified regarding bottled water. Health Canada and other food safety agencies have established strict regulations to protect public health and set limits for the trace amounts of any any possible in water. Any trace amounts found in recent studies have been significantly below limits set by any government regulatory health agency, and confirms that the plastic containers used for food packaging do not pose a risk to human health. Furthermore, the bottled water industry invests millions of dollars to encourage the recycling of water bottles. As with any other single-use product, the responsibility for doing so rests explicitly with the consumer. As for cost of bottled water, it is about 30 cents per litre when purchased in the typical size of two dozen 500-ml bottles or in 3-litre bottles. Bottled water is a safe, high-quality and convenient beverage. Our moral imperative must there be concern over an illness in Canada due to consumption of bottled water? *Elizabeth Grunwald, Executive Director, Canadian Bottled Water Association*

CONSIDER US, my generation, knew that water came from a tap, or if you were lucky, a cool spring running from a granite well. I am reminded of the days in the 1960s when I'd get up and sucking your own A bomb shelter was in vogue. I read then of an enterprising entrepreneur in New York selling bottles of dehydrated water for your shelter when the

time came, just add water. It seems time and sophistication have made us more foolish. *David M. Cornfield, London, Ont.*

GORE'S GOT IT

I WAS AMUSED to read your last editorial ("Al Gore's tactics grip on the 'truth,'" From the Editors, May 14), which only highlights your thug grip on reality. Indeed, as politicians have negative health impacts, but climate change is destroying lives, livelihoods and communities in the north. If there isn't a report or media outlet that hasn't taken up the real and present effects of global



warming, do some stretch. It is true Gore's transformation is questionable and he exaggerates, but that's better than denial. *Moussab Sanaa, Montreal, Ont.*

YOU CRITICIZE Al Gore for not telling the whole truth and then promptly do the same by saying it's impossible to meet Kyoto targets without an economic collapse. This is true of the present government's plan. It is, however, possible with a different approach by using undeveloped hydroelectric capacity for the old heads, and by shutting down fossil fuel plants. We can retrofit all older homes in Canada to save heating oil. We can build in low-emission cars and reward conservation. This discussion should be about how much money we should spend to reduce our emissions instead of being blocked by false promises of impossibility. *Jeff Markgraf, Watons, Que.*

YOUR EDITORIAL ignores Al Gore's lifelong commitment to environmental activism. This includes undergraduate studies with professor Roger Revelle on CO₂ emissions, his 1993 book *Earth in the Balance*, and his work on Kyoto. You appear to have completed your transformation in the official organs of the current government. Still we refer to your magazine now as *Harper's*? *Gerard MacDonald, Winton, Ont.*

AFTER LISTENING to Al Gore's portrait and witnessed editorial of Canada's environmental plan, I was glad that George W. Bush—not he—became president. *Andrew E. Livingston, Woodstock, Ont.*

O BARBARA

HOW DARE Barbara Aronell compare her situation with the experiences of people in the Holocaust who joyfully watched the gas chambers because they were together ("Blocking out the hateful rays in Chicago," Opinion, May 14)? I came to this country as a displaced person and never forget the suffering of those who were left behind in Poland in unmarked graves. Never have I related Conrad Black's position to the Holocaust. Barbara, if you want empathy, talk to Emily. *Ernest Zaslavsky Wyler, Scarborough, Ont.*

IT IS TOO BAD Ms. Aronell (or her editor) attributes the useless story "The Gilt of the Map" to some pseudo Irishness named "O'Niency" rather than to "O' Henry," the pseudonym of William Sydney Porter. But for this distraction, the parallel she draws between the story and the Black's situation would be quite apt—once teaching. *Sean Keenan, Calgary*

ONE-MAN SHOW

THERE ARE DELICIOUS moments Paul Wall's column on Stephen Harper's recent speech at St. Narcisse de Beaurivage, Que. ("Now every generation is having national dinners," Opinion, May 14). Narcisse is the Greek myth in ancient mythology who is literally headless. To live with his image reflected in water and drowned. So, when Wall refers to Harper's "one-man management style" and calls him "an alarmingly intelligent man," does he mean it? Wall's use of a narcissistic leader formatably staged? Stay tuned. *P.J. Robertson, Monrovia, Ont.*

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And now, the real test for Stéphane Dion



PAUL WELLS

My latest theory is that Pauline Marois hired Gilles Duceppe to run her campaign. "Gilles? Gilles? Pauline! Look, I'm going to run for Parti Québécois leader and I need you to cover me." "Cover you?"

"Well, I'm going to make the PQ swallow the most dramatic overhaul in its mandate in 25 years. I'm going to do it in this election for getting me to their leader, they have to abandon the idea of a sovereignty referendum for the foreseeable future."

"Fikes! Only two years ago they passed a platform calling for a referendum as soon as possible after election. On a clear question. Without a Quebec Canada partnership. Backed by a unilateral declaration of independence. Only two years ago. The PQ wants to abandon that? It's not even late. Now they're supposed to finger about that? All of it?"

"Well, they also dismissed me as a serious candidate. I need them to forget that, too. If I'm going to get the PQ to abandon its status (I've been reminding people it's not a status) I need the greatest of egos come down the pike since René Lévesque."

"So, Pauline? Duceppe. How are you going to make them do that?"

"Well, that's where you come in, Gilles. I need you to make a complete ass of yourself. Like, a monumental ass. A beautiful thing. Duceppe I need you to make the whole shebang thing look elegant by comparison."

"But..."

"C'mon, Gilles. Take one for the team." Which is how it came to pass that Gilles Duceppe (I) pronounced he didn't want to be PQ leader on a Monday, (II) announced his candidacy on Friday (I) withdrew his candidacy on Saturday. The guffaw that erupted drowned out the real moment: Duceppe had changed about to take place in Quebec.

Pauline Marois will be the lone separatist

PQ leader in 20 years (Never mind that, only two years ago, the dedicated Marois "complexly in harmony with" the most radically separatist platform in the party's history. Times change.) The Blais, which looked doomed during Jean Chrétien's last days as prime minister—as an op in *La Presse* carried the headline, "The blow up of the electoral map?"—and now from its

of the popular vote in Quebec since Confederation. Marois fans would insist it was Jean Chrétien who did the driving, but whenever the fact is that support for the Liberals is consistently lower in Quebec than elsewhere. Once that it was an election day in 2006.

I would be being bullied by them. There is, of course, a school of thought which holds that Dion, as the author of the Clarity Act, is



If he can't capitalize on Duceppe's blunders, he's in real trouble, and not just in Quebec

derailed during the sponsorship scandal and the Grittery inquiry is now harder to explain than ever. How do you write for change if, like most francophone Quebecers, you live in a riding that has gone blue for most of two decades? The answer, it was for another party. Which means a very narrow party will be even more focused on Quebec than before, because now all of them can hope for real gains there at the Blais's expense.

The explosion the arrival of Jean Malouin, a broke and cheerful former Quebec cabinet minister, is a candidate for the NDP. While not quite a "real" candidate, he is the party's most prominent Quebec personality in a very long time. His presence may have something to do with the fact that in last onecent poll, the NDP scored higher among francophone Quebecers than the Liberals.

Which brings us to the Liberals, and if you happen to notice, like the Liberals, to a certain extent feeling. One can certainly say for the Liberals in Quebec what Stephen Harper said for the Canadian. Blais in mid-2001, when it was actually lower in the polls than before that time "in fact to grow has been." Paul Martin drove the federal Liberals to their lowest share

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Assigned to Tony Blair, I became a convert



BARBARA ARONOW

The announcement by British Prime Minister Tony Blair on May 10 that he would resign after June 27 had personal resonance. In 1992, I worked for Andrew Neil, the brilliant editor of the *London Sunday Times*. Blair had declined to run for the Labour leadership earlier that year but Neil had a premonition, which led to assigning me a magazine profile. I found the man sufficiently offputting that I made the job cut editorial on the Blair letting me stay with them. Horrifyingly, they agreed, and I packed up for a weekend at their home in Seaford, Blair's constituency.

Events began with a hair-raising drive to a BBC radio show during which the car driver carelessly collided with a truck, producing debris over the road and a whiplashed Tony. My first glimpse of Cherie Blair came as she returned from work in her husband's old car to a crowded room of friends and family on the road picking up shards of glass. Blair and I shared a role to the radio show where he performed badly, and then said sorry a word when the same taxi driver—often in a different vehicle—returned to drive us home.

I have vivid memories of their house: of gloomy rooms, beamed old sofas, dark and gloomy hallways everywhere, including on the floor next to children's toys or a smelly dog in the dead of night to make collect telephone calls to my then boyfriend. Conrad Black. Blair talked twice with an enthusiasm that reminded me of my college days. Cherie glared silently from her post at the Age 1. I followed Blair around for several months. But then I was a convert. If Labour didn't put this man into the top position of shadow news secretary, I wrote, it would be a halfhearted good omen for the Conservatives. I've never stopped telling the Blairs personally and found the in both unduly generous:

Two years later Blair was Labour's leader, and in 1997 he became prime minister. His taking of Labour's place (I was the owner of the means of production as a good) opened the door for "New Labour" and Blair's "Third Way." He fit the times, the British had waned of free enterprise battle-axes with Margaret Thatcher but wanted to keep their newfound economic health. The charismatic Blair was a happy solution.

He yielded Labour away from economic socialism but gave way with relish to other aspects of the interventionist state. There were bills on anti-social behaviour and parenting enforcement in family services, and governance guaranteed to per cent of high school graduates to college by 2010, with the predictable result that entrance standards dropped and exams were taken over halfway. Colleges were paid to take "disadvantaged" into account even as in the wake of the 2005 London bombings Blair pronounced multi-culturalism "dead."

Class warfare sharpened, finishing was outlawed and within a year of that extended for beyond 10th in real costs on homework. The House of Lords was gutted when virtually all the hereditary lords were sent packing—without an amendment against the autonomy to the punitive death duties levied by his children, peerlessness instantly became in the fifth hand being Blair's neglect of the arts while cultivating pop celebrities paid

I have vivid memories of their house: gloomy rooms, old sofas, dust everywhere

the intelligentsia. The unwritten constitution that had served Britain so well was mangled with the devolution of Scotland and Wales and a new system of regional government that included such agreed economic to the Working Time Directive limiting only time. Still, the core was kept out of Britain, a move that helped the U.K. remain at the top of Europe's economic tables, and the 2007 budget reduced corporate tax rates to 28 per cent (though Chancellor Gordon Brown has become steadily more conservative). Blair did for socialism in the U.K. what Doug Young and his successors did for Conservatism in China.

He is the first Labour leader to see success, and with Thatcher, the first PM to see three successive terms since the 1832 Reform Act. As with almost all living-term leaders, he went from his brilliant. His support of Blair's policy was modest with hard. The Labour's economic policy can't begin to compare to Blair's (in 2009) it was refused to be finger-pointed but result in denial of a pension, identity card and many social benefits. Donors phoned made to him "So-

politics" described policy making was top-down rather than cabinet government. "It was" referred to patterns of government interventionism on matters of 2006. "Tony's" included those who loaned Labour millions and who got pennies.

Style became a sticking point. Standing in the rain on the day Diana, Princess of Wales died, Blair's disapproval of her as "the people's princess" became the rallying cry for a watershed of good leading to charges that American-style conservatism had overruled



Blair's reserve. Speeches announced such as "Thank" promising to visit the victims of the 9/11 attacks. Blair's "we of which" holiday houses given on French estates. Cherie Blair came in for special attention in everything from the coast of her husband to her after shopping was condemned. Criticism of her career—the one other bar head's career in the media—showed little sympathy for a woman juggling parenthood, career and a profile just below the Queen's. With little time for real friends, she too needed, just like the Queen, a court of hangers-on happy to run and fetch.

"Hand or heart, I did and then I thought was right," said Blair in a powerful resignation speech. His unpopularity in America since is proof. There were, after all, no voters in the U.S. In that term he is the rare politician who put principle aside of personal interest, who had to show, I suppose, that on the greater scheme of things one's principles count for no more than one's judgment. For Blair, that verdict is not yet in. ■

Barbara Aronow is muskoka@rogers.ca



GLAMOUR AND GUNS IN MEXICO

Mexico will host the May 28 Miss Universe pageant. But battling with drugs on the border in Cancun isn't much like the fast-food, swimwear and drag-reliant assassinations are all too common occurrences.

1. Gang Tawel, brother of Canadian Jeff Tawel, outside the hospital where his brother was on life support after sustaining injuries in the resort city of Cancun.
2. Mexican soldiers in a raid to search for traffickers in Apertopon.
3. Antonio Mejia Chavez, the police chief of Chihuahua, has died near his home, murdered by gunmen dressed as federal police.
4. Police carry the coffin of chief Chavez.
5. Miss Cecilia Reyes and Miss Grecia in Cancun.
6. Forensic workers carry the body of Eduardo Vidauri, Exequiel, head of Nuevo Leon's anti-kidnapping unit, who was gunned down.
7. The body of one of three men handcuffed and killed by suspected gunmen from a drug gang in the border city of Nuevo Laredo.





The way brides and grooms talk it's 'as if planning the wedding is the hardest thing that's ever going to happen to them'

REBECCA MEAD TALKS WITH KENNETH WHYTE ABOUT BIG WEDDINGS, THE ELOPEMENT INDUSTRY, AND THAT 'OH, MOMMY!' MOMENT

Q Does having a big wedding mean anything for a marriage?

A Of course it doesn't. That's not marriage; that's a wedding. It's going to be a perfectly happy marriage, although that's one of the things that the wedding industry tries to imply. I mean, it does a subtle, but there's a suggestion that if you have a big wedding, according to the wedding industry standards, then you will have created a perfect union. The idea is that if you spend 16 months—what is the average engagement period—preparing yourself for this one special day, you'll be in a position to have a perfect marriage.

Q So you don't think it's possible to start things off on the right foot with a great wedding or to have a bad wedding?

A Well, having a happy celebration is a nice way to start a marriage, but starting a marriage on date because you've spent tens of thousands of dollars—the average cost of a wedding in the United States is \$28,000—that's not, I think, the best preparation for married life. I also think that observing for 16 months about what your wedding colours are isn't whether your napkins are the right design isn't good preparation for marriage either.

Q I think you said in your book *One Perfect Day* The Selling of the American Wedding that brides put so much emphasis on their wedding because they know that marriage itself is going to be a letdown.

A I think that's a misunderstanding of what I said. When I do think it, a wedding is a much less significant event. It used to be that this was the occasion on which you left your childhood home, you started relying on somebody for the first time, you perhaps started your sexual relationship with that person for the first time. It used to be a very, very big change in a person's life, and I think for most of us, for many of us, it's much less different now. I mean, there is a big difference between being married and not being married—as anybody who's going through a divorce will tell you—but it's not this change you feel the next day when you wake up.

Q It's no longer the life-changing decision we used to be in *Four Acres* (which, it is)?

A No, it's not. Just this couple was the wedding day of last moment, they want to feel as if it is filled with significance—in a word it is—but the way in which it used to be. What I think has happened is that the wishes of the newlyweds have been transferred to sort of (invented) traditions of planning a wedding. Brides and grooms say, "Well, if we can go through this we can go through anything," as if planning the wedding is the worst and the hardest thing that's ever going to happen to them. The wedding itself has become the big transitional event, rather than the marriage.

Q Time did not go to that point where wedding days are big experience or consummation?

A What's new is the degree and the nature

of businesses who've recognized that the bride—and the groom too—but especially the bride, is a very choice target.

Q Florist, dressmaker, jeweller—they've all been a part of it, right?

A No. I found a sociological study done in the 1970s of weddings of people from all over America, and of these couples a third of them didn't have an engagement ring, a third of them didn't have a reception, and a third didn't go as a honeymoon. These are all things we now think of as standard.

Q And it's just going to let wedding as a society cut spending a lot more money on things separately to us?

A Yeah, yeah, but you know, it's a very emotional time in a person's life, a wedding, and it's understood that this is a great market for designing because this is an event when they're willing to spend that dollar. I see a scientist being given by a very popular videographer who told his audience of aging videographers, "Go home and double your prices," and there was a sign on the door and the sign, "Never underestimate how much money people will pay to make sure their daughter's wedding day is the best day (it possibly can be)."

Q Where is most of the money going now?

A The reception's obviously very expensive, and the average price of a bridal gown is now a little over \$1,000.

Q What's the high cost?

A Well, a high cost gown is going to cost you many thousands. You can go and drop

\$12,000 on Vera Wang, but that's the result of the market. But there's an million proliferation of new goods and services.

Q It is true that couples are now getting married later with their parents as if?

A Yeah, this is something I saw at the Great British Expo, which was a travelling road show that goes around the country and does presentations.

Q What else can you do?

A It's unfashionable. I saw a very high-end party party, a party that had paid to come and—of it's remembering one night an attendee who was there in black tie at something. I mean, that's everything from hotel food, even classes as you can work on your muscles in your arms as that you look good in your wedding dress to, you know, it just goes on and on and on.

Q What's paying for it all?

A In many cases it's still the father, but increasingly couples are paying, and what that means is that grooms are having more to do with the planning and more say in what the finished product looks like. "This is our day to make a statement of our personality as a couple and to bond ourselves with bottled wine." Nine out of 10 brides when they go and register for gifts will now be accompanied by their groom. So he's getting to choose the colour, too.

Q It's kind of ironic that spending on weddings is the only place on the planet that is increasing along with the divorce rate.

A Well, that could be more hopeful than a wedding? Especially for this generation who've lived through their parents' divorces, that's that hope that if we do it properly then that will secure our future.

Q Has the behavior of brides in their wedding day, or the emotional behavior of brides on their wedding day, changed or increased because of all this spending? Are we seeing more bad behaviour over marriages?

A We've started to hear about this more, this emotion, this so-called *bridezilla*, right? And we all know stories about people who've gone crazy over choosing their chair, their ribbons and so on, and it's a very unhelpful stereotype. I think that when a stereotype serves the public imagination like this it's pointing to something deeper. I think there's a great deal of anxiety about the size and the over-expanding nature of weddings and saying, "It is really worth it to spend the equivalent of 75% of the median household income in the United States on one day."

Q I think, though, you could argue that in recent years we've seen weddings become better than ever. We're getting married like The

Wedding Planner and Wedding Crashers, and you've seen a lot of arrays of young women for whom having a wedding is high on the list.

A That generation, they still think the echo boom—the children of baby boomers—are a much more conservative bunch than their parents are. But it's not a confirmation for wedding planners, and the key to that generation was about the echo-boom bride, and she did that one of her top goals in life is to have a two-wedding wedding. She wanted to experience not only making the wedding bigger.

Q But this market can only flourish if it's a huge demand. What's behind the demand?

A People want their wedding to feel momentous. But I think the authorities that used to govern much more of the way that weddings were conducted—which is to say religious institutions or the dictates of family—those authorities are declining in importance, and the commercial world has stepped into that vacuum, and so now you have to the wedding planner to tell you how to have your day more than your own or your mother or your grandmother, heaven forbid.

Q However, maybe it might be one you take this enthusiasm for wedding as a sign of confidence in the institution of marriage?

A I think you certainly can.

Q So what are the results, now?

A There to the most of all, the cost of wedding, partly because people are trying to avoid the wedding industry by saying, "Well, we're going to elope." There is now a growing elopement industry. I went to Texas, which changed its marriage laws a few years ago to make it easier for foreigners to get married there, because they wanted to come get with islands like Jamaica, where they already had a well-established wedding industry for tourists. Now one of these couples who get married in Austin are Americans.

Q It's always been a local competition, the wedding, isn't it?

A The current trend is for things to be globalized so that you use the wedding as an expression of your own personality and the personality of your husband—or your wife—as a couple. Of course, at the same time, getting married is about the most conformist thing that you can do, you're signing up to join the central institution of the culture.

Q Are people still getting married, for the most part, is it?

A Obviously there are still many, many church weddings, but a lot of ministers will say, "Oh, my God, I don't want to have this. I get more divorces because these people are really grappling with life and death issues, but in wedding everybody is worrying about what they look like."

Q Is the market in fact still a factor?

A The bride's mother is still incredibly

important figure. There's something I was told about as a training exercise for bridal gown salespeople called the "Oh, Mommy!" moment, which is when the bride is in the bridal store and the gowns on the floor and looks at herself in the mirror and says, "Oh, Mommy!" because that's the moment at which she sees herself fulfilling the fantasy that she has always had—in her at least that since the last get engaged—and if you're a bridal mother that's the moment at which you say to the bride, "You know, we should get you a veil," and, "You really need a train." This is the moment at which you sell her all the other stuff.

Q Are you married?

A Yes.

Q How did you get married?



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At 11:40 a.m. on Monday, while I was working on the book, we got married on a Thursday afternoon in a greenhouse in New York, by a judge, with a handful of family and friends there, and then the following Sunday, we had a party for friends and family at the house we already lived in.

Q Did you go to a honeymoon?

A We didn't get to do a honeymoon. I mean, we'd been on marriage before. This time, we'd been on marriage in order to get over the wedding, and I didn't need to get over the wedding. What we really experienced to me was being married. ■

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AIR INDIA: AFTER 22 YEARS, NOW'S THE TIME FOR TRUTH

Like 9/11, it might never have come off if Canada's exports had heeded the signs

by KEN MACQUEEN AND JOEN GEDDIS

"At 8:46 on the morning of September 11, 2001, the United States became a nation transformed."—Final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

The Air India bombings, which claimed 332 lives, most of them Canadian, almost 22 years ago, has belatedly been called Canada's 9/11. In truth, it was never close to that. The date, June 23, 1985, is not scored into the nation's soul. The events of this day will cut the headlines of tomorrow's lives and shroud the destinies of thousands more, but it will not shake the foundations of government, nor transform its policies. It was not, in the main, even officially acknowledged as an act of terrorism. The political word "tragedy" seemed ill-fitted, somehow. It did not carry the same imperative for a rigorous public examination of the cascade of intelligence failures that allowed two planes to depart Vancouver International Airport with bombs implanted in their cargo holds.

In only one, man-on-man hearing room, that man Supreme Court justice John Major has a mandate to probe the gaps—often they played like dead-end rivers—have been torn down by time. For all that, the revelations

that have made the hearing so recent would prove the merits of revisiting the disaster. As well, documents made public by the inquiry, and combed through by MacQueen's, point to a tragic series of misuses, and disastrous false assumptions. They convey a correlative, powerful impression that the same scenario as to Canadian history might have been averted if clear warnings, repeated over several months, had been heeded.

In fact, the dozens of threat assessments coming from India, and from Air India, its main airline, seem to have been treated with a suspicious bordering on contempt. A few months after the bombings, the minutes of a meeting of federal officials from departments including Justice and Transport, as well as the RCMP, claim it would have been "impossible" and "too time consuming" for a dog to have sniffed all of Flight 182's baggage for explosives. That viewpoint opens a new light on the surprise testimony of retired police dog handler Serge Gauthier, who said the inquiry he was called to Montreal Airport for a month of Flight 182 late the night of June 23, only to find the plane had departed.

At the same time, more serious, held Jan. 2, 1986, a Transport official recounted how Air India routinely sent letters before almost every flight outlining threats received. "It was felt by most people present," the document summarizing what transpired at the meeting states, "that this was Air India's way of having someone security for their flights at an extra cost to them." But the threat, of course, proved all too real. And at the time, CBS seemed to know that. A CBS official at the meeting related how soon after days

away credit, Rand was notified that days before the explosion he had an intercept conversation that strongly hinted at it. His attempt to pass on the information was, he says, brushed off by the RCMP.

Other hearing documents try to be publicly and include a 661 1984 assessment by CBS that seems in bad taste and at worst tongue-tied wrong. In the "terrorism report," CBS said the means to Sikh control of the Golden Temple, 115 days after the Indian army had stormed Sikh holy Indian shrine in bloody invasion in June 1984, "produced a definite trend toward moderation by Sikhs. In fact, the return did little to quell the rage, an anger that continued to simmer and directly led to the massive action that October of Indian-born member India Gandhi by way of her Sikh bodyguards, and the Air India bombings the next year.

As Major draws together the strands of money and documentation on Ottawa, he can find a tempest in the reports of a more recent terrorist attack. Many of the apparent intelligence failings of Air India resurfaced in altered form south of the border 16 years later. The path to the terror attacks of June 1985 and September 2001 bear similarities that go beyond the obvious: the use of plane loads of innocent by magistrates religious leaders as cover stories in distant lands.

The U.S.—until Canada, which was in a criminal investigation and then a failed attempt to question newspapers in the bombings—was quick to refuse a bipartisan committee task to determine why the nation was caught unprepared and how to prevent a repeat in the future. In July 2001, less than three years after the attacks, a 160-page FBI page report and a 14-page extensive summary

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MAJOR (left), Carleton and his dog (below). The public in Ottawa in 1985 and 2001 bear similarities that go beyond the obvious.

The 9/11 commission report, written with the sense of a self-styled novel, became an instant bestseller. Its authors have been criticized for errors of omission or fact. And conspiracy theorists have dreamed a web of connections up, still, it is a chronicle of 1,200 interviews and more than 5 million pages of documents. Major's more modest inquiry can't hope to match its scope at once; yet he seems certain to explore strikingly similar issues. Among them:

"The system was blinking red."—The 9/11 commission

By the summer of 2001, U.S. counterintelligence officials were under siege, bombarded by a avalanche of dire risk assessments, the commission notes. "Indeed, there appeared to be possible threats almost everywhere the United States has interests—including at home."

The report cited a serious concern of U.S.-focused analysts, starting with the 1991 attempt to bring down the World Trade Center with a truck bomb, and continuing assaults on U.S. personnel abroad, including the 1996 bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the suicide attack on the destroyer USS Cole, which killed 17 sailors in October 2000. By then, the U.S. issued its attacks were perpetrated by al Qaeda, under the direction of Osama bin Laden. The American military response had been tacitly real, says the report, leading bin Laden to fully that attacks "at least on the level of the Cole" were risk-free.

In Canada by 1984-85, Sikh extremists opened with near-simultaneous while fighting for and financing the attempt to carve a Sikh nation they called Khalistan out of India's Punjab. No group was more instrumental in the battle than Balbir Khalsa (Tiger of the Blue Turb), founded by one-time B.C. real estate worker Gurminder Singh Parmar. In India, Balbir Khalsa was a notorious gangster. In Canada, it was a registered charity. In India, Parmar was a violent murderer and terrorist. In Canada, he was a media darling, a charismatic speaker at Indian temples, known in *gharbas*, and a few discovered too late, the suspected mastermind behind the Air India bombings.

India, which is believed to have had more groups tracking Canadian Sikhs than Canada did, grew increasingly alarmed. Not so the RCMP and CBS. While officials in Canada were discussing Air India's concerns, Warden was firing off letters from New Delhi on the growing Sikh problem. In June 1984, he noted the violent demonstrations by Sikhs in Canada in the aftermath of India's attack on



WARNINGS WERE TREATED WITH SUSPICION, LEADING TO CONTEMPT

Among the documents are urgent warnings from William Warden, Canada's high commissioner in India from 1983 to 1986, about the emerging Sikh terrorism danger in Canada. His diplomatic cables were to have been widely unheeded, and certainly never translated into aggressive action by the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. CBS would learn that type of operations when Air India Flight 182 blew apart off the Irish coast. That same June day, two baggage handlers at Narita Airport in Japan were killed loading a bag arriving from Vancouver onto a connecting Air India flight.



FORMER DIPLOMATS Warden (left) and Bannister. Their advice never translated into aggressive action by the RCMP and CBS.

Before the Air India disaster, the agency had lost the risk of a Sikh extremist strike as "high" since bags from Vancouver were loaded onto Flight 182 in Toronto, and the plane also stopped in Montreal. A justice official said that warnings were communicated to security officials at those two airports. "The answer was no," the document states bluntly.

STYLING: JAMES C. GILBERT

sermed sequester at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. He warned that Indian sources believe that "moderate extremists in Canada were being set up to assassinate," and that Indian officials were telling him about "the strong possibility that Canadian Sikhs might engage in international terrorism activities."

Last that summer, his cautious hesitations about the rise of Sikh extremist activity in Canada had put Canadian relations with India "on a rather rocky road." Some he was wondering why things hadn't been laid after Sikh officials initiated an Indian diplomat and government minister in Canada. He suggested to officials both at home and in the city to get the solicitor general, the cabinet minister responsible for the RCMP, to make "a directive to federal agencies to clarify that officials against diplomatic promises and personnel are to be prosecuted vigorously." Warden left little doubt, however, that Indian officials had lost all confidence in Canada, noting that the Indian government did not plan to move ahead for the extradition of Parmar because "we knew you won't do it and we don't want to embarrass you."

By the fall of 1984, Warden's plans for action to the Sikh terrorism risk grew more urgent. He referred to a perception in India that Canada is "susceptible to Sikh extremists." The assassination of Indira Gandhi that October triggered wild celebrations among Sikh extremists in Canada, and set off riots in India in which thousands of Sikhs were killed by Hindu mobs in retaliation. Warden pressed for information about any Canadian links to Gandhi's murder. He soon Parmar's name as "a frequently mentioned" in Indian newspapers as a possible foreign conspirator in a conspiracy.

His frustration over Ottawa's failure to clamp down on the more extremist Sikh groups in Canada comes through despite a veneer of diplomatic formality.

In a Nov. 14, 1984, letter, he refers to "unfettered threats of violence to Mrs. Gandhi" issued by Sikh extremists in Canada in the weeks before her assassination, and closes by noting, "We trust this [sic] will have made clear [the] downward path along which [Canada's] relationship with India is suitably being propelled by [a] group representative of national interests."

Warden said in an interview with Maclean's that the Indian government's main demand was that Canada should arrest, charge and prosecute Sikh extremists who had attacked Indian government buildings and officials in Canada. Failure to crack down on Sikh extremists who threatened violence, he said, probably emboldened the terrorists. "If the Canadian government had, as an example, come out and vigorously enforced the law

with respect to public threats to assassinate the Indian prime minister and that sort of thing," Warden noted, "then I think it might well have taken the wind out of the sails of the militants, have served to rest that we were watching them, and possibly dissuaded them from going in for so they did."

"The most important failure was one of imagination," the 9/11 commission

Secretary American government, under Bill Clinton and then George W. Bush, under



SECURITY FORCES WERE ILL-PREPARED FOR NEW REALITIES LIKE BLOWING UP AIRLINERS

estimated the domestic threat from Islamic extremists, the report concludes. "Terrorism was not the overriding national security concern for the U.S. government," the commission said. The CIA failed to gather intelligence needed to recognize and there had been little serious thought given to the possibility of domestic activities being hijacked as weapons against the American people. "The missed opportunities to thwart the 9/11 plot were also symptoms of a broader inability to adapt the new government emergency problems to the new challenges of the 21st century."

Canadian security forces in the mid-1980s were also ill-prepared for new realities, such as the idea that hijacking planes might end as blowing them out of the sky. While CSIS agents had Parmar wrapped up under surveillance for months before the bombings, they were hindered by a crucial fact: Parmar spoke Punjabi, a language no one in CSIS's Vancouver office understood. His right as well have been going to work as he and others had a series of meetings, telephone calls and even conducted a visit to Ottawa in Vancouver in 1984.

It was weeks before witnesses were tried and agents could gain some idea what had happened. The report went on to criticize, on more indirect grounds, the relatively low priority placed on the person. "They were call-

ing all this down intelligence but it was not prioritized, so the information just sat and was eventually erased," says Karishma Sandhu, a post-doctoral fellow specializing in terrorism at the University of British Columbia.

The plot was given increasingly bold in their actions and often violence in their reports and threats against moderate Sikh critics. Yet the RCMP and CSIS failed to connect the dots. "An incredibly large number of people knew about it, knew something about it," says Sandhu of the bomb plot. "They just didn't have the specific information." The same combined of the 9/11 commission wrote, "no analytical work because the lightening that could connect the thundercloud to the ground."

"Hijackers had to beat out one layer of security—the security check-point process," the 9/11 commission

The 9/11 hijackers armed themselves with small knives, box cutters, razors or pepper spray, which they didn't require on strong magnets, or wouldn't raise their hands despite the heightened level of alert, the report says. "They were in the process of getting the system was 9/11." So, at least, was their death rate.

In retrospect, the stakes for the Air India bombings were remarkably low even though security for the few Air India flights leaving Canada each week was, or should have been, on high alert. The airline baggage system allowed luggage to be loaded on two separate Vancouver planes connecting to Air India flights en route to Toronto and Japan. In neither case did the airlines have to risk discovery on certain days by accompanying their luggage.

At that post-mortem meeting in early 1986, federal officials discussed the security "as it was at the time" on the day of the Air India tragedy. It is impossible to know at a good search all baggage going on board as it was a few years later, the report of the meeting notes. In any case, they cautioned that measures to detain the aircraft. A 1986 report offered interesting insights into allowing the government to stop a departure only if there is "a specific

threat to that plane." And the record of the meeting/body states that there was "no specific threat" to Air India Flight 181 as it sat day.

"Management should have ensured that information was shared and duties were clearly assigned across agencies and across the foreign domestic divide." The 9/11 commission

The U.S. had a vast array of largely unused files agencies concerned with security. It failed to have an ability to pool and interpret information and formulate a coherent plan. "For your agencies involving critical information in the CIA, the FBI, the State Department, the military and the agencies involved in homeland security," the commission noted. The agencies were watching everything, it seems, and seeing nothing.

Canada's more modest security forces had their own reconnaissance problems. "CSIS was only just out of the starting gate. It was less than a year old when this happened," says Stuart Farnon, an adjunct professor at security and intelligence studies at Simon Fraser University, and the former head of research for the parliamentary committee reviewing the CSIS Act and the Security Officers Act.

active analysis of the target, country profile, past terrorist activities, support base in Canada, ideology, etc."

If lines of communication between CSIS and the RCMP were finally, if not fully, opened up, it seems to have been frequently ground as out of the loop. Documents released by Martin's inquiry later at that time among department's files show how CSIS and the RCMP were approaching Sikh militant activity. On June 1, 1984, an External Affairs official wrote to CSIS's foreign growth of counter terrorism to ask about the situation in Vancouver and London of two members of the militant Sikh Student Federation, who were caught trying to smuggle machine guns and ammunition to England on the way to India. The official called for an article on the case appeared "in go far beyond other information received from the RCMP and CSIS on this matter." He asked CSIS to compile of the incident not primarily criminal in nature, or suggested a terrorist threat.

"We learned about an enemy who is sophisticated, patient, disciplined and lethal... It makes no difference between military and civilian targets." The 9/11 commission



Sikhs protesting Gandhi's government in Vancouver in 1984 (opposite), Parmar (above, center) is welcomed back to Canada the same year after being jailed in West Germany.

in 1990. "It was going through nothing problems and there was conflict between CSIS and the RCMP."

Could that be why CSIS's threat assessment of the Sikh terrorist risk on June 18, 1986—"high," on scale of "low, medium and high"—was not passed on to RCMP airport security at Pearson and Miraflores? No answer is offered in the 1986 post-mortem meeting, only an explanation from a CSIS that India Desk official that the assessment was based on "a sub-

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In many ways, Canada was at a similar state of affairs in 1985. Canadian security authorities had little understanding of the Sikh community as a general, and little prospect of eliminating its radical elements with a very force that did not speak the language or look the part.

Critics including Brian Mall, the co-appeal-attorney in Vancouver's *Indo Canadian News* newspaper, attribute the ignorance to a combination of racism and incompetence—the same forces that felled, until now, an inquiry into the disaster. “I just say, they just didn’t care about non-white Canadians. Indo Canadians were just those guys, not us guys,” he wrote in a scathing analysis of the hearings. As for the quality of the intelligence force, “the Indian police regarded the Canadian as inferior to them as supporters of children,” Mall says, “or as a bunch of goofs.”

Worries, somewhat more diplomatically belated, the Indian government had better information than Ottawa about what was happening in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto. “They obviously had good sources in Canada, probably better sources than a lot of Canadian agencies, from the information they were sending us,” he said. Given his faith in the information he was getting from Indian officials, Worries said he has wondered, in the two decades since the attack, whether he did enough to convey that sense of growing concern. But he remains unconvinced. “I was not in the 1980s and early 1980s, and I feel satisfied that he did his best,” he said. “I wish I was as powerful as I could be,” he said, “with out going over the edge.”

By the spring of 1985, Worries says the message that Sikh leaders had to be taken seriously was getting a lot through. In mid-May, just over a month before the India House attack, the members of the day, a working group of officials from several federal departments was set up to regularly discuss Sikh extremists. The next month, federal officials drafted a proposal from Washington to form a tripartite group to share intelligence on Sikh militant activities among U.S., British and Canadian officials. Three days later, of course, came the attack.

The U.S. was soon transformed by the events of 9/11 and by the painful examination of its failings. It is a harder and more vigilant place. “We believe we are safer now,” the commission concluded. “But we are not safe.” Canadian authorities, for reasons both valid and dubious, had no access for such reflection. What mistakes were made, which lessons learned—lessons were learned—have been forgotten. “There’s a lot of blinkered view,” said one judge. Many inquiries, in government and raising reasonable questions, are growing its waters. But a host of misadventure from a false sense of safety. ■

A paradise for pedophiles

Montreal, it seems, is the place to be if you're attracted to children

BY MARTIN PATRICHON • For over a decade, Robin Sharpe has been known as Canada's most notorious child pornographer, a label he wears with pride. After a 1995 raid on his Vancouver apartment, where police found pictures of children engaged in sexual activity, along with several other violent works of fiction depicting sex between men and young boys, Sharpe launched a sustained legal campaign for the rights of a proud, pioneering pedophile.

In the ensuing minority, though, means he could hardly walk down the street without someone recognizing and, more often than not, staring at him. So after his many legal battles (and thousands in jail) Sharpe moved to Montreal, a city that officials like him just anyway but also says in the persecution to which he is subject elsewhere. “I love it,” he said in a phone interview from his apartment in the city's Plateau district. It's been here a year, ever since returning from Sri Lanka to visit what he calls a “young friend.” “Things aren't taken as seriously here as they are in English Canada. It's a lot more laid back, accepting. I think people tend to mind their own business a little more.”

Doesn't a city of hundreds of pedophiles would agree. The street of Steve Goldberg, a notorious U.S. pedophile in his own right with a spot on America's Most Wanted list, was a Montreal suburb this week further illustrated a point: many pedophiles find the place less suitable for their needs than any other city in North America. Montreal is a good place to live if you happen to be attracted to children. Goldberg was ultimately arrested on immigration charges, he was living in the city legally.

“I have never felt persecuted in Montreal,” pedophile Ian Hodgson said in an email. In 1989, Hodgson was convicted of gross indecency and sexual assault against boys as young as 11. Now 61, the 6'4" year old has been an active member of the city's pedophile community, particularly as a founding member of the Gaymeade Collective, a semi-organized group of pedophiles—adults who are attracted to children—who gathered for 10 to 15 years until about 2004 to chat, socialize and, according to one member, encourage their partners to better hide child pictures

away from the authorities.

Montreal is also home to Epifora, a conspiracy that provides hosting services to some of the most prominent pedophile-related sites in North America, if not the world. These include *Big Chat*, *Gay Chat*, *Open Islands*, *Christian BoyLove Forum*, as well as Sharpe's own sites and *Kiss Mail*, a pedophile-friendly



SHARPE, MOVING TO MONTREAL TO ESCAPE COUNTRY, GOLDBERG (RIGHT) WAS ARRESTED THERE

as well by prominent pedophile Lindsay Ashford, who recently won a prize from *Banish Children's* and an eight-year-old daughter. The city is also the birthplace of Steve Spivey, an online resource “dedicated to promoting open communication among boy-lovers, the most underserved and misunderstood sexual minority remaining in today's human society,” according to his website.

These sites, all of which are not based and include no explicit images, serve as online bulletin boards for pedophiles worldwide. Topics range from the banal to the profane: one young man wrote to graphic descriptions of sexual fantasies. “None of our members are used to meet children or making deals or anything,” says Epifora's president, John White, an admitted pedophile who says he has effectively taken a vow of silence. Epifora was started in 2005 by White, a

Montreal newspaper programmer and founding member of the Gaymeade Collective. In comparison with Sharpe's *Isle de France* hosting, Epifora collects subscription funds for services such as *Webly*, which promotes pedophiles anonymously when sending emails. Personal chats must prove they are pedophiles by answering questions about other content in the service. Only then—and after a strict vetting process—do they materialize to place their face in an envelope between two sheets of paper and send it to the post office box that serves as Epifora's mail drop. Subscribers are asked to stop using popular email services such as Hotmail when communicating with other pedophiles.

Site says the Montreal company is doing well. “It has led to a substantial increase in the amount of abuse that would have been carried out by the people who built or participated,” says Sharpe. “Pedophile,” a computer technician at a Montreal CIOGEP and lifelong pedophile, agrees. A founding member of the Gaymeade Collective, he says consequently

THE POLICE ARE DOING LITTLE TO MONITOR THE PEDOPHILE SCENE IN MONTREAL, SAYS ONE EXPERT



that he couldn't live his lifestyle anywhere else in North America, particularly since he has a poor record of abuse against a boy in the early 1990s. “Because of attitudes in Montreal and Quebec, there was a level of comfort for us to make some public announcements,” he says. “I'm not saying we had ball bounces up or anything, but I didn't think people in Toronto would do this.”

He is probably right. Notwithstanding the recent capture of Steve Goldberg—which some think is a local tip to TV's *Asper's*

Most Wanted (the local resident has been granted a \$100,000 reward by Gresham police have done little to monitor the Montreal pedophile scene, according to University of Montreal criminologist Pierre Tremblay, who notes a declining study of pedophiles in 2005. He points to the Gaymeade Collective, which at least 200 members had great sexual records involving children. “What I find incredible is that it worked for 20 years without any trouble,” Tremblay says. “That surprises me. It's public information. I think the logic why [Gaymeade] was working, but I never got a response.”

Popular suggests Gaymeade was only a club for pedophiles to talk about computers, though there is evidence members tried to cover up the second episode of a fall on member John Melancon, a convicted pedophile, was part of Gaymeade for roughly a year, but left suddenly after allegedly molesting and abusing a young boy, then was arrested. Jason Garrison, also known as the boy's mother and shared his name over Melancon's actions with other members, only to be told to shut up. “To make a long story short, the people in charge decided that they didn't want anything to do with it,” Garrison wrote in his blog. “They said that if anyone asked about the [collective], then we'd say it was a computer users' group, and that's all.”

Montreal's cultural divide remains polarized. Recently, Corbin, who is Sharpe's former website administrator on pedophiles published on the *Problems of Just Photo Ethics: An Abolitionist's View*. It was his own thesis at Concordia. He was due to speak at the university, but the talk didn't happen. Before the Quebec representative Jason Gauthier of the police force charged with finding out pedophiles, says Epifora had an “incident” removed when Veron stopped providing Internet connections to the site early in November 2006—and that most of the company's banned users were still alive as a result. But in Epifora's John White notes, getting an answer to provide bandwidth and hard drive space for his forum was as easy as sending a few inquiries email to having computer connection. Today, he says the security of his site is that most of November are back up. “It's actually really easy.” ■



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Rules of engagement are based on Canadian values and law, because we believe those things take fundamental values. Our boys are required to follow our rules of engagement. The laws of armed conflict, and the Geneva Conventions. When faced with a situation that might go outside that, they start it. May Peter Gifford, of the Operational Planning and Liaison Team, on the Canadian philosophy for training Afghan forces.



Why don't we all steal from the ADQ?

BY BENJAMIN ADRIEN - Forget about Ciller Desjardins going from senator to politician in a second. A better measurement of how deep a political minefield Quebecers step into is in the fact they now seem prepared to entertain the removal of the Parti Québécois to a position they abandoned as a tactic and an inspiring idea.



MARION For want of any new ideas, the PQ are using Desjardins's

law, her doctors said. And her strategy toward the Parti Québécois from oblivion, or from exile? The "new" PQ must position its timetable for a referendum. It must find ways to make the state apparatus more efficient and user-friendly. It must pay attention to the real-life concerns of citizens, as opposed to retaining unpopular solutions down their throats. And, at the end, the PQ must return back to old-fashioned cultural nationalism, and develop kind of "new nationalism" pushed by André Bessette and that entire old down town media in Montreal.

Sounds like a plan, but it sounds familiar, too. Isn't that the very trick that Mario Desjardins and his brother Anton did to escape the Québec role to the front row of the official Opposition in the National Assembly on March 26? Yes. Having their better ideas and buzzwords stolen by the big boys in the established game seem to be a built-in plan for the upstart ADQ. Liberal Premier Jean Charest has already affirmed the ADQ's platform to fill the (imagined) address of his minority government on May 8—to the point that some analysts quipped Charest has used Desjardins's party as his own think tank.

But the ADQ is overwhelmed. "It's called acting the agenda, not it off," Guy Lévesque, a party official, quips. He says the ADQ's demagogues is just raw beef building an impression and turning it inside out in the media. "We are not in a hurry to change our mind. Next, we want to be in a position to imply more there. In power." ■

B.C. hunkers down for the Fraser's wrath

BY NANCY MACDONALD - Canadian soldiers here set up an emergency command centre, command post in Aldergrove, B.C., a municipality of 12,000 on the eastern tip of Greater Vancouver, bracing B.C.'s flood threat from the Fraser River, now extremely high, anticipated from May. Guy Whelan of CFB Edmonton and 100 soldiers, half in uniform, have taken over Canadian Forces base in Aldergrove. Should the Fraser spill its banks, the soldiers, along with military reinforcements, could help evacuate area residents, provide security or establish shelters for those displaced by high water.

Over the winter, the West Coast was unprepared by now, usually heavy snow accumulated in the mountains. Some areas take on holding a full 130 per cent more snow than usual. As the snow turns to water in the warm spring weather, the Fraser, B.C.'s longest artery, and its major tributaries, are swelling beyond their normal range, similar to conditions that resulted in the great flood of 1948.

The Fraser runs the width of the province, from Mt. Robson near the B.C. Alberta border in the Rockies, and eventually empties into the Pacific Ocean at Vancouver. Neaning the river, the river runs past Chilliwack, Abbotsford, Mission and the eastern Vancouver suburbs, before its 190,000-acre delta of B.C. delta agricultural ground. Earlier this month,



HARPER by the Fraser's conditions similar to those of the 1948 flood

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced \$16.5 million to fund local flood mitigation projects. A total of \$11 million is being spent by the Provincial Emergency Program of B.C. to strengthen dikes and more sand and silt bags at key points. So far, the weather is co-operating, says the head of the B.C. River Protection Centre, Allan Chapman. But a sudden spike in temperature or heavy rain between now and mid-June could break the current calm, with catastrophic results. ■

Canada: Land of private-school scams

BY ERIN MILLAR - "Don't apply to Canadian private schools blindly." That's the warning the Chinese government issued to its citizens last year after reports of education scams in Ontario and British Columbia. And last month, the Times of India reported that "a group of Indian students who travelled [to Canada] in pursuit of their M.B.A. dreams are living their worst nightmare." The B.C. government had purchased Lumberton University, a private institution in Vancouver operated by the Kingston Education Group, to shut down by May 1. One Lumberton international student told the Times, "We are shocked. We never imagined something like this can happen in this developed world."

But as millions of foreign students dream of a Canadian education, a growing number of entreprenurial business have learned how to take advantage of that aspiration. Lumberton's closing left approximately 300 students, most from India and China, without credit, having spent up to \$40,000 on their tuition. The Times called it a "giant reminder" of the perils of studying in Canada.

According to a government investigation, Lumberton advertised degree programs before gaining authorization, submitted misleading documents when applying for degree-granting status, and did not maintain the required financial security to protect students. And Lumberton was not the first private university to come under scrutiny. B.C. has recently ordered three other institutions to close.

Recently, a provincial judge ordered private Vancouver University Worldwide to stop granting degrees. The university says that its online degree programs are not conducted in B.C., and it may ignore the order. The province argues that although Vancouver University Worldwide also places students in B.C., its Vancouver head office is enough to make the university fall under B.C. law.

As for that Chinese government warning? According to the Beijing education consulate in the Chinese Embassy, it will only be removed when Canada does more to protect overseas students. ■



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FOR TWO DECADES Marina Namazi neither forgot nor talked about these memories. Her family refused to talk, and she never talked it.

Once upon a time in Evin

One woman's account of her years in Iran's most infamous jail

BY BRIAN BETHUNE • Marina Namazi is only 42 now, and most of the events related in her book happened over the course of just 26 months a quarter of a century ago. This hardly sounds like a classic memoir, yet *Prisoner of Tehran* (Penguin) is one of the finest ever written by a Canadian. Namazi's heart-rending account of her time in an Iranian prison touches on some large issues, particularly the power of religious fanaticism to lead good people to do evil acts. But the memoir's brilliance and grace lie more in its intimate scale, in the way it deals with the burden of memory, the need to bear witness and the struggle to stay the human heart. It bet before all else, *Prisoner of Tehran* is simply an astonishing story.

The Revolutionary Guards, the thick troops of the Ayatollah Khomeini's totalitarian Islamic regime, came for Marina in her family's Tehran apartment on June 15, 1982. She was just 16, but her "crimes" had in fact begun when her father had stood up to a mad imam and asked the feminist law instructor for more

calculus and less Koranic preaching. She had dangerous friends, too, schoolmates with older brothers involved in leftist political movements. And Marina was a Christian to boot, thanks to two Russian grandmothers who had fled the Bolshevik Revolution.

The guards took Marina's two sisters, mother and father, and she was taken to Evin, the political prison north of the city that is probably the most feared place in Iran. As yet, of course, and death under the Shah. Evin continues to fulfill the same function for the new regime. In 2003, Canadian-born journalist Zahra Kazemi, caught taking photos inside the prison, was dragged inside, beaten, raped and executed. From the moment Marina arrived at Evin, blindfolded and hands tied, events began to unfold in a terrifying speed. She rather too innocently, when she was interested in supposed "Communist sympathies" at her school. Ah, a man in his late 20s who seemed intrigued by his Christian presence, and Namazi, the 14-year teenager. When the couldn't provide the answers they wanted, Namazi told Namazi's first with an antechamber and they were a terrible mess of ill-motivated and she was almost successful. An interview and had a doctor inspect her with pinkish lips. But the nurse didn't last long.

I Woke from a dreamless sleep with a sharp pain in my right shoulder. I hunched over me, looking in. After I was blindfolded and taken outside, I hunched inward, me to lying on to the chair of a girl who was standing in front of me. I held on, she started to walk, and I limped after her. My feet were burning as if I were walking on broken glass. We walked on, and the cold wind whipped against me. Each step was more difficult than the one before. I stumbled over a rock and fell. Reeling myself up as the fence creaked, I took the slow, desperate measure the better, using my arms to pull myself forward. I found me back on my feet.

Where are they taking me?
"With property or I'll show you right here," Namazi hissed.

I struggled as we were finally told to stop, and someone is covered my blindfold. An intense light shone on my face and I blinked. After a few seconds, I looked around. A spotlight on the night. Like a white, sparkling fire blending from ghostly shadows, black hills surrounded us, we seemed to be in the middle of nowhere. There were four other prisoners with me: two girls and two young men. Four guards were pointing their guns at us, their faces expressionless as if carved out of the darkness. "Move now to the chapel!" Namazi yelled out. His voice coming from the hills. Thirty feet away, a few wooden poles reached out of the ground. We were to be executed. The cold feeling made my chest paralyzed me.

One of the two male prisoners began to

as not a part of the Koran that asked God for forgiveness. His voice was deep and strong. The other young man was sitting in the pole. One of his eyes was swollen shut, and there were bloodstains on his white shirt.

"Next to the poles right now!" Namazi yelled, and we slowly stepped.

Sorrow filled my heart and lungs like a thick, suffocating fog. One of the girls started to run. Someone yelled, "Stop!" But she kept on going. A gun shot over through the night, and she fell to the ground. The girl moved onto her side, and her back curved upward. "Please... please don't let me die," she moaned. The crowd covering her shadow glimmered in the dark, while light from a gun to her head, Namazi stood over her. She covered her head with her arms.

The girl standing next to me began to cry. Her deep sobs seemed to slip her than she fell to her knees.

"Fit the others to the poles!" Namazi yelled.

One of the guards lifted me off the ground and another ran me to the pole. The rope dug into my flesh.

I was so tired.

It felt like I was going to hurt as much as being hanged.

Namazi was still pointing his gun at the injured girl.

"Guns! Ready!" I heard a voice calling out as we opened my eyes. There was a loud crashing noise, and a black Mercedes came to a stop right in front of the guards. All stepped out of it: five went straight to Namazi and gave him a piece of paper. They spoke for a moment. Namazi nodded. His hand landed on mine. All walked toward me. I wanted to run. I wanted Namazi to shoot me and end my life. All turned me from the pole, caught me, lifted me, and walked toward the car. I could feel his hands against my body. I suddenly tried to struggle out of his arms.

"Where are you taking me?"

"It's okay, I won't hurt you."

As I stepped into the front passenger seat of his car and slammed the door. I tried to open it, but it wouldn't open. He jumped in the driver's seat. I began punching him, but he held me back with one hand. Guard five was up and away.

I opened my eyes to a light bulb shining over me. As I sat in a corner, staring at me. He said he had gone to Ayatollah Khomeini, who was a close friend of his father's, to have my sentence reduced from death to life in prison. The Ayatollah had given the order.

I didn't want the Ayatollah to save me. I wanted to die.

Feeling the weight of his eyes on my skin, I hid the blanket covering me tightly that

my fingers began to hurt. He finally stood up. Every muscle in my body tight as steel. "Are you afraid of me?" he asked. "No!" I swallowed. "You don't need to be."

The laughing in his eyes was real.

FOR ALMOST TWO DECADES Marina Namazi never forgot nor talked about these memories. When she left Iran, she returned to what she calls "happy but" "disaster" for the last time. She had a lovely childhood, her only sibling a brother 14 years older and away at school, her

HERAT'S PARENTS were Christians, in fact, she grew up in the Shah's Bafra Prison in Iran.



Just 16, she'd go through things more painful than torture and near execution



parents busy with their work (her father a dance instructor, mother the owner of a beauty salon). Namazi had no happy going to church or shopping with her grandparents, or at the family's cottage by the Caspian Sea. There she rode her bicycle, played tennis and, as the grew older, went to parties where teenagers played big Gipsy music. All everyday occurred in the Shah's happily known world, where women in chador pulled with women in mantarans on Tehran sidewalks.

Sitting, too in the living room after hours as Anoush, Oza, Namazi recalls how suddenly he firmly refused to ask her about Evin, and how responsible she found it to start that conversation. "It was a 20-year journey, that walk out of Evin," she says, matter-of-factly. "You remember that other woman I saw?" she asks, referring to another prisoner released at the same time, a woman who wouldn't budge from the prison gates until Marina took her hand and led her away. "She was the worst one," says Namazi. "She knew better than me there's no going back."

Then, in 2006, Marina's mother died. "That changed you," that makes you up. I realized my mother never knew me, and that I could die tomorrow and what then? Who would have known me? I kept surviving, but what did that mean? Namazi knew, with a sudden certainty, that she had to tell her story. So many others had died without acknowledgment, but her friend Danesh, called to her death over the prison loudspeaker, about whom Namazi wrote with helplessness, elegiac sorrow. "If I screamed until my throat bled, if I let my hand against the wall until my skull cracked, it would not save her. We listened for gunshots, and soon they came, as if glass clouds were falling from the sky. It felt as if we were in the dust that was so close, for her own experience quite another. I knew I'd have to say everything, no more hiding, no more keeping anything back. And that would include the parts for me most painful and difficult to discuss than her memory or my own experiences."

After he moved her from Namazi's living space, as disappointed from Iran, volunteering for free in his service in the Iran Prison. Four months later he was back, with a heart-stopping proposal. He had left the prison to get her out of his thoughts, he said, but he was away now he knew he wanted to marry her. All didn't expect her love, at least not at first, but he did expect her acquiescence. She belonged to him now, he said. He had loved her life. And if she thought it made sense, he would be the one who would tell her parents and excuse Anoush, a fellow Christian with whom Marina was in love before her arrest. When she bowed to the inevitable and accepted the marriage, All named the same as that, inevitable death: the would have to convert to Islam, a necessity both for him politically and to qualify for his "heartfelt" family.

Such was Marina's introduction to what was possibly the strongest development in her entire life. She could only guess what All's family, rich Islamic merchants, would make of her as a prospective bride for their only son. "I thought they would hate me," she says, "until I went to their house for the first time. The mother opened the door, a cry

women in a disorganized chaos, with her gray hair pulsing out of pity in her eyes. She made me first, after five months in Evin, like a human being again." So even as Ali with Al had his nightmarish agents—Mehmet graphically describes what can only be called her rape on her wedding night (she was 17)—she had gained something she had always longed for: "For someone like me who always wanted to feel part of a family, it was wonderful. They had their own wedding, and made me feel like a daughter."

Ali's father bought the newlyweds

"Arab dances!" I yelled. "Call an ambulance!"

His mother ran back inside. His father knelt beside us. "Are you okay?" Ali asked me. My body ached all over, but I wasn't in pain. His blood was all over me. "Pin it," he said.

Ali grasped my hand. "Father, take her to her family," he managed to say. I held him close. His head rested against my chest. If he hadn't pushed me, I would have been hit. He had saved my life again.

NIGHT DIED UNACKNOWLEDGED WITHIN Evin's walls. Mehmet's story sheds some light on theirs. (Right) Her second wedding, a happier one.



A centre of torture under the Shah, Evin prison fulfills the same role today. It's where Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi was killed.

a house, members of police force in civilian clothes drove them back to the safety of a prison, where Ali lived among the guards and Mehmet among the prisoners, who did not know of their marriage or their pregnancy.

ON SEPTEMBER 26, 1980, Ali and I went to his parents' for dinner. At about 10 o'clock, we said good night to everyone and stepped outside. It was a cold night, so Ali's parents didn't come out with us. As we walked toward the car the loud sound of a motorcycle filled the night. I looked up to see it come toward us from around the corner. Two dark figures were riding on it, and as soon as I saw them, I instinctively knew what was about to happen. Ali also knew, and he pushed me to the ground. Shouts were fired. Ali was lying on top of me. Barely able to move, I managed to turn to him.

"What are you doing?"

He reached, looking at me with shock and pain in his eyes. My body and legs felt strangely warm, as if wrapped in a blanket.

His parents were running toward us

"Good, please, don't let them die!" I cried. He smiled.

He hated him, I had been angry with him. I had tried to forgive him, and, in return, I had tried to give him love.

He struggled to breathe. His chest rose and fell and then was still.

The flashing lights of an ambulance... a sharp pain in my abdomen... and the world around me disappeared into darkness. I opened my eyes. One by one, round droplets fell from a clear plastic bag into a cube. Drop. Drop. Drop. I followed the tube with my eyes; it was connected to my right hand. The room was dark except for the faint glow of a night light. The door opened, and blinding light expanded and reached me. A middle-aged woman wearing a white headscarf and a white cottonous cape came.

"Where am I?" I asked her.

"It's okay, dear. You're in a hospital. What do you remember?"

"My husband is dead."

My husband is dead? Dear God, why does this hurt so much?

A doctor appeared and told me I had lost my baby. Whatever was left of me crumbled.

MARINA WAS BORN IN TWO, and so in a sense still is. "I didn't mean that baby," she says now. "It was my real life sentence, something that would keep me tied to Ali forever. But when I lost it, I realized how much it meant to me. And Ali too. I realized how much I missed his company, his love, his understanding of me and, yes, his passion. I didn't like the idea that maybe I had loved him, and I don't know if that was true." There was much good in

that second wedding, a happier one.



STOJANOV, investigating what al-Qaida was up to in Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11, anything was possible, especially when anthrax-filled letters arrived in the United States in the fall of 2001. The first ever WMDs are generally assumed to have been used by the Taliban in the invasion of Afghanistan in 1996 or more recently, the Bush administration's strategy to roll the war in Iraq back in 2003. "WMD" has become a catch-all term for what scientists call chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and the technology and scientific knowledge that supports their construction. A lot of effort has been put into debunking U.S. claims that Iraq possessed WMDs prior to the 2003 invasion. Almost no public investigative effort has, however, focused on al-Qaida's interest in WMDs.

The recent publication of former CIA director George Tenet's book, *The Devil's Deal*, should reinforce such an examination, but unfortunately the focus has been on Tenet's "dark drama" of the rise and fall of al-Qaida as a threat to the United States, and the issue of biological intelligence and the drive to war in Iraq. What if there were a Qaeda, however Tenet connects several dots, some of which

are in any way argue that the Bush administration got it wrong when it comes to WMDs in Iraq, and maybe they got it wrong as the master of WMDs and al-Qaida. Tenet has only just laid the lid, we must dig deeper, because chances are Canada is much at stake as Britain or the U.S. Sherlock Holmes reminded Watson that sometimes it was the dog that didn't bark that was the significant thing. The same goes for al-Qaida's search for weapons of mass destruction capability, truncated and disrupted as it is. ■

ANTHRAX, BOMBS AND AL-QAEDA

The terrorist network has been pursuing WMDs for years

BY SEAN W. MALONEY • Outside of Bin Laden's *Al Fird* in Afghanistan is a complex of compounds and ranges known as Tarnab Fort. This is the site where in 2003 "bioweapons" were found. Canadian scientists, Turkish forces were one of several sites in the country where al-Qaida pursued research into acquiring weapons of mass destruction. My friend, whom I will call Muhammad, showed me around the now-flooded area in 2006. "It was back in 2004. We had 12 American special forces soldiers with us," he said. "Twelve soldiers came in at night and brought another five men. Our men surrounded the place. We also did this at a mosque in Kandahar city. We spent several days protecting the areas as they worked." When I asked Muhammad what they were looking for, he told me that al-Qaida was making a chemical weapon that he called "marijuana" and that they may have tested it. "They used it once, against people on the radio here. These people had blood coming from their noses and openings."

Indeed, back in 2002, personnel from Le Col. Pat Stogryn's and Isaacson, Proctor's Canadian Light Infantry, assisted in "SARS" or sensitive site exploration—missions associated with the hunt for what al-Qaida was up to in the weapons of mass destruction field during that time. In the

wake of 9/11, anything was possible, especially when anthrax-filled letters arrived in the United States in the fall of 2001.

The first ever WMDs are generally assumed to have been used by the Taliban in the invasion of Afghanistan in 1996 or more recently, the Bush administration's strategy to roll the war in Iraq back in 2003. "WMD" has become a catch-all term for what scientists call chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and the technology and scientific knowledge that supports their construction. A lot of effort has been put into debunking U.S. claims that Iraq possessed WMDs prior to the 2003 invasion. Almost no public investigative effort has, however, focused on al-Qaida's interest in WMDs.

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TEXAS CORPSES WOULD BE HAZARD TO AVIATION

Texas State University has suspended its "Body Farm" project while it searches for a new location. In body farms, researchers study how cadavers decompose so they can help police investigate crime scenes. The university's proposed site for the farm has been ruled out after it was determined that the bodies would attract too many buzzards, which in turn would endanger aircraft flights at a nearby airport.

Recreating Stasi history piece by piece

BY PATRICIA TREBLE • German archivists are about to tackle the world's largest puzzle game. After the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the East German secret police, the Stasi, started to destroy their files. After shreds were overwhelmed by the task, Communists officials tore documents into pieces. Though the Stasi burned some expensive records, 36,360 sheets stuffed with five-million pieces of Stasi documents were confiscated after reunification. Since then, documents in only 323 bags have been pieced together by hand.

After assembling the old method could take



COMPUTING EXPERT with a bag of shredded Stasi documents

up to 500 years to finish the puzzle, archivists at Berlin's Prastashof assume believe they now desperately speed up the process. Last week they began a pilot project on 400 sheets of torn paper believed stolen from the end of Communist rule. The snippets will be scanned into computers and then analyzed. For two dozen experts: features including colour, shape, handwriting and texture. Like someone doing a jigsaw puzzle, the computer will group similar images and then fit the pieces together. "It's very exciting to decode Stasi papers," declares Jan Schneider, the project's leader. "You have a feeling you are making history."

The decoded Stasi kept extensive files on citizens and even foreign officials, fed by a huge network of informers. "Many important documents are shattering in those boxes," explained archivist Marianne Thirliche. It's hoped that the new records will expose long-simmering, subtle criticisms, and allow more victims to claim compensation. The initiative behind the cause collection could be deciphered in 10 years. For now to match pieces, they could wait for the latest method—to scan the documents shredded during the 1970 U.S. Embassy takeover, then hand print forensic copies western.

A suicide bomber's worst friend

BY NANCY MACDONALD • To the British get set, the most fascinating record being deployed to Iraq this spring is not a Windsor but a yellow Labrador retriever. Three-year-old Pyrogon was the first dog in history trained to detect suicide bombers, according to Ryan O'Hearn, editor of *K9 Magazine*, a lifestyle magazine for dog lovers. Although dogs have been used to sniff out explosives concealed in luggage and buses, Pyrogon has also been trained to read facial signals and body language. On suspicion of a potential bomber, she has been taught to gently signal her handler, who will then tackle the suspect.

"Dogs can precisely see you sweat," says noted animal behaviourist Nick Dodrson. They are much more in tune with what we're thinking than we give them credit for—hence they could easily pick up a bomber's anxiety. Scott Shaw, of the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University in Massachusetts, breeds and trains hearing Labradors. He says they are particularly well-suited to police and army work. First bred as companions to fishermen in Newfoundland, their drive to work with and please people is incredibly strong. And they are motivated by loud noises or crowds of people, things that would shake other breeds.

Pyrogon (the name means "peace" in Korean) was donated by South Korea's largest conglomerate, Samsung. Samsung's mobile cellphones, the electronics firm established a dog training school in Gyeonggi province in 1994, and routinely donates guide dogs to the visually and hearing impaired.

"South Korea has a reputation as the West as a nation of dog owners," O'Hearn explains, Samsung, and particularly the company's president, doesn't like it, and wants to create a new image of the dog as a friend and helper, and of Koreans to the West. Trained by specialized British police officers, Pyrogon will be deployed to monitor Iraq, where a suicide bomber killed 16 in the offices of a Kurdish political party earlier this week. She answers to six, six and ready, yes, really.

Nightmare in Poland's orchards

BY CATHY COLLI • Poland, which has long been Europe's primary producer of apple juice, has lost almost all of this year's crops—between 80 and 100 percent by most estimates—after consecutive cold snaps ravaged orchards, especially in the normal and southern regions. Polish government officials warn that the country is facing a "major" agricultural and economic crisis, and the president of the fruit producers' association has said that this kind of devastation "has only taken place once—and that was before the Second World War."

An exceptionally warm winter in Poland caused apples and other fruit, including strawberries, cherries, plums and pears, to bloom early this year. So when temperatures suddenly dropped several degrees below zero in late April and early May, the fruit had no chance of avoiding lethal frost.

And with only three per cent of Polish farmers using frost protection equipment, the country now stands to lose up to \$2.2 billion in apples and apple juice production. "This is a national disaster," says Sylwia Dominiak, a spokesperson at the Polish Embassy in Ottawa. "What this means for Poland is very high prices on fruit and on products made from fruit such as jams and jellies," she explains. Some observers warn that the price of apples will more than triple because of the diminished supply.

Worse still, "farmers might lose contracts on exporting fruit to other countries, such as Denmark. Last year, Poland produced half of all of Europe's concentrated apple juice—200,000 tons of it, which also accounted for the majority of the continent's apple juice market share, followed by China and Germany. The fact now is that Poland will be supplanted by another country as the top apple supplier. Italian farmers are already capitalizing on the scarcity of Polish apples."

The government in Warsaw has begun offering special credit loans to farmers, most of whom have not yet recovered from the financial instability they endured after a drought last summer damaged apple orchards throughout the country.

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FRANK STRONACH HAS BARELY MET DEFYING EXPECTATIONS AND COURTING CONTROVERSY. NOW HE IS EMBARASSING THE SIGNED-ROCK OF JAP.

THE FRANK FACTOR

First a bid for Chrysler, now a partnership with a Russian oligarch. Is Frank Stronach nuts?
BY JASON KIRBY
AND STEVE MAICH

Not many people remember the Territo, but those who do will never forget it. It was a four-wheel drive sports car, with a top speed of 140 km/h and fuel-injection motor, and back in 1989 it was heralded as Magna International's bold step up into the business of designing and manufacturing cars, and beyond the less glamorous world of repairing car bumpers and parts for America's big three automakers. Magna unveiled the Territo prototype at the Detroit auto show, with plans to start

producing it in 1992.

But life is to say everyone—analysts, investors and clients alike—was less than thrilled. Around that same time, Magna's financial leader, Frank Stronach, was digging the company out from beneath more than \$1 billion in debt. The stock was languishing, and Magna had embarked on a slash-and-burn campaign that would see dozens of plants shut down, executive dining rooms closed and corporate jets sold, in a valiant move to appease bankers and stave off bankruptcy. After sinking more than \$8 million into development costs for the Territo, the idea was quietly abandoned. But the whole sports car digression left ardent investors deeply wondering: Is Frank Stronach crazy?

Today, almost two decades later, puzzled observers are asking the question again. Or is it still? Stronach's audacious and unorthodox attempt to diversify beyond auto parts are familiar ground for Magna investors, but

the company's latest moves have focused even more attention on a man who has been long obscured by robust growth in North America and Europe. For all Stronach's attempts to branch out, Magna now finds itself overwhelmingly dependent on those financially troubled Detroit automakers, verifiably shut out of fast-growing markets in Asia, and with a stock price that is roughly where it was 30 years ago. This week, the company got even more bad news: BMW is pulling out of an agreement under which Magna built the X3 SUV in Austria. Analysts say this contract accounts for up to 10 per cent of Magna's profit in last year, and its loss leaves the company even more reliant on its struggling American customers.

Last month, in a puffer to light a fire and revitalize his stalled ambitions, Stronach announced a widely panned, and ultimately failed, attempt to buy the Chrysler Group. But if acquiring a money-losing automaker

that had already humbled the management paves behind Magna's fate seemed like an ill-conceived gamble, this was nothing compared to his next big move.

Last last week, Stronach staked out an agreement to sell part of the company to Oleg Deripaska, a controversial Russian billionaire with close ties to the Kremlin who is banned from entering the United States. The move, which will see Deripaska taking control of Magna's Russian subsidiaries and left analysts scratching to explain what Stronach is up to. In hopes of breaking into the burgeoning auto markets of the former Soviet empire, Stronach has begun a long march into the heart of a region riddled in

By 1997, sales were more than a billion.

That might be enough to satisfy some people. Not Frank Stronach. Throughout the cyclonic head-along races and races of his career beyond the dull business of twisting and turning metal, he built a sprawling home firm in Aurora, Ont., just north of Toronto, and became a renowned buyer and brother of distinguished executives—a position that would eventually come to occupy the core of Stronach's time and energy: his car business. Thus followed a string of failed ventures, an attempted acquisition of Cadillac from the federal government in 1986, a short-lived business venture called Vika, known more for outrageous badger than for journalism.

MUTIN WITH DERIPASKA (below): The Russian has cultivated political ties while Stronach has focused on horse racing.



'FOR WESTERN BUSINESSES THERE IS NO RULE OF LAW IN RUSSIA. THE COURTS ARE CONTROLLED.'

Yes, Stronach has many home runs on his record. And many strikeouts, too. And as the 76-year-old embarks on what is arguably the biggest risk in Magna's history, the open question is this: In all the work of the career crick who defied conventional wisdom and launched a horse operation into Europe 15 years ago? Or is it another doomed adventure by the impetuous gambler, who once spent \$8 million building a car that never got off the drawing board?

FRANK STRONACH has never been easily satisfied. Even his name seemed somehow too conservative after the 22-year-old emigrated to Canada from his native Austria in 1954. As the well-worn story goes, he moved to Montreal with \$100 in his pocket, called golf balls as a driving range, then moved to Kitchener, Ont., where he washed dishes until finding a job at a local plant making aircraft parts. He adopted the name Frank Stronach, and in 1957 started his first tool-making business. By 1977, sales had grown to \$60 million, as major manufacturers sourced fabrication and assembly work.

never to lose control of the company. But his propensity to run mostly off of divisions *redoubled*. Some things worked, like a courageous and persistent expansion into Kasep's beleaguered parts sector—another new contribution close to a third of Magna's annual revenue. Most though, like the racetracks, casinos and casinos in parks, have done little but sap Magna's energies and money. Luckily, as a result, investors and buy firms' analysts have generally warmed to Stronach or learned to treat him. For decades a peripatetic board member, the stock, depressing the share value, a phenomenon known among his investors as "the Frank Factor."

A few years ago, when Stronach floated the idea of launching Magna Air—an airborne luxury hotel for business travelers—analysts and investors finally warmed, and that idea too was eventually dropped. But at Magna's annual meeting in 1998, Stronach learned the hard way. "It's not good to have all your eggs in one basket, no matter how good the basket." The trouble was, while Stronach was ranting about the attractiveness and building solid company, not to mention, the global economic industry was being turned on its head. Magna's failure to adapt is what brings on so the problems it faces today.

JAPANESE AUTOMAKERS haven't just put a dent in the fortunes of Magna's key customers, Ford, GM and Chrysler, they've chained

a clothing company, a disco, and a ch-chi restaurant named after his now-famous daughter Edina. He overthought to reshape Canada, moving for Parliament as a Liberal in 1988. Soundly trounced, he returned to the car business to find Magna entering on the edge of disaster.

After a decade of rapid growth and even faster spending to upgrade facilities and buy small companies, the company was being crushed under a mountain of debt. The ensuing turnaround is now the stuff of business legend. Magna slashed costs and engaged an audacious and protected force with bank and bond holders to restructure the company's debts. It was in the midst of this turmoil that Magna fell, relatively, let the Territo die. "They started flying so high and then they crashed and burned," says Daddridge, who was brought in with great fanfare to be Magna's CEO in the first months of the debt imbroglio. "They were lucky to survive bankruptcy, and they knew it."

Stronach emerged from the ordeal vowing



them up to a raw truck and loaded them off to the wedding yard. Toyota, Honda, Mazda and Nissan have purchased the Reg Three over the past decade, edging them from their dominant position in the industry. Kiefer then Magna riding the wave and reducing its reliance on those fading rivals, the opposite has actually happened: U.S. auto makers accounted for 65 per cent of Magna's sales last year, up from 61.5 per cent in 2004. And Magna still only makes European sheet, BMF, and that figure stands at 31 per cent. Canyax and Accuris are flying off the line, but Magna can't stay big at this business.

Not that Magna hasn't tried. The company has agreed up more than two dozen plants and offices across Asia, but Magna's sales in all countries outside of North America and Europe accounted for just 1.69 billion last year, a tiny sliver of the company's total revenue of \$14.2 billion. Rather than reaching out to Magna, the Japanese automakers have simply brought their own suppliers with them to North America. American rivals like Delphi and Johnson Controls, meanwhile, have spent billions building facilities in places like India, China, Japan and Singapore.

Maybe that's why Magna has changed its name so dramatically in the last week. After repeatedly telling shareholders the Fiat deal holds the key to Magna's future, executives have started to downplay the report's importance. "China is already confronted with our expansion," signaled Wolf, Magna's co-CEO, told board and shareholders last week, adding, "our culture is closer to Russia than to that of China or India."

Magna is now saying the promise of Russia's potential. The company says last year sales were just 2.6 per cent more than two million vehicles, and it expects to continue to rise as many Russians buy their first car. The deal, which says Deripaska pay up \$1.5 billion in exchange for voting control equal to that of Stroyvesh's, also offers a low cost base from which to produce parts.

Yet for all the warm smiles and handshakes, the state of the merger remains bleak, leading some to wonder why so many other Westerners have gotten burned in Russia. "The West runs businesses, there's no rule of law in Russia," says David Sacks, author of *Darkness Never*, the book of the Russian Criminal State, and a fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. "The government doesn't take contractual obligations seriously, the courts are controlled, the criminal element is integrated with government and bribery and corruption. All of that makes for a very bad environment for a company."

The sleep shift is all the more startling

because of the man with whom Stroyvesh has thrown his lot. Deripaska isn't just any old Russian oligarch. An owner of the world's second largest aluminum company and auto-maker GAZ, plus a collection of other former Soviet enterprises, the 39-year-old oligarch is said to be Russia's richest man. His wife is the step grandmother of former president Boris Yeltsin, and Deripaska has nurtured a strong relationship with Russia's new leader, Vladimir Putin, who is not above

ring of an autocrat, he said. But Stroyvesh, who stands to pocket an estimated \$150 million when the deal closes, remains cautious, and obviously respectful of Russia's respect for political culture. "We cannot have total freedom overnight," he told shareholders. "It'd be too cheap."

But whether Stroyvesh can peacefully co-exist within powerful new partner remains to be seen. They may be divided over a wage, but both men have far more in common than that. They are both smart, strategic and as long as it's their strategy, Stroyvesh has blasted corporate governance across in the past, telling disgruntled shareholders they can go ahead and sell their shares. Deripaska and



FRANK AND ERIKA STROYVESH: Magna's run like a merry-go-round, but Deripaska changes that

turning the old businessman into a Siberian going when it pleases him.

As with most of the super-rich oligarchs who came to control Russia's economy after the collapse of Communism, money questions continue to dog Deripaska. Just how did he cobble together his fortune out of the ruins of the Soviet state? It's a part of Deripaska's bio that is continually played over. For the Federal Bureau of Investigation, though, the gap was a red flag. After he visited the U.S. in 2005, the agency had Deripaska's wife revoked, according to reports, because he failed to satisfactorily answer investigators' questions about his past.

When it came time last week for Magna to introduce its Russian counterpart, executives dismissed such concerns as "personal" matter. Stroyvesh said he personally sought assurance from Putin that all was well with his new partner. That move drew the ire of the lawyer representing Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the energy oligarch now serving eight years in prison after running afoul of Putin. Canadian corporations shouldn't be "lending the

the six directors" of the Magna's board won't be so easy to push away. Back in the early 1990s, when Deripaska was cynically accumulating a 30 per cent stake in a Siberian aluminum facility, he faced a backlash from the facility's Communists management. "I was expecting they would treat me as a shareholder," the oligarch told a reporter recently. "But they said, 'No, you have the shares, but we run our business. And it's separate.'" In an industry where corporate misdeeds were often settled through violence and brutality, Deripaska came out on top, without ever naming one of Russia's legal system. This is the partner Stroyvesh has chosen for his great Eastern expansion. So is Magna's long-awaited breakthrough, or a game of Russian roulette?

To be sure, like many other things, it would be hard to "do" something that he'll be doing with the deal," he says. "It's not like some of the French's consumerism. Inflation is one of the things that's not good for the country. It's not a really solid move to do it. I really think one big wrong move to do it."

BY LARRY

GIANT SLAYERS

Forget Wal-Mart, ethnic supermarkets are rolling the grocery business

BY CATHY OLLI—When Wal-Mart started selling fresh, imported, discount produce and groceries last autumn, observers clucked that Canada's big grocery chains were about to be crushed. But in expanding multicultural communities across the country, the latest threat may come from the opposite end of the market: smaller, independent ethnic food shops targeting pocketed riches. "I suspect that the sales at most modern ethnic super markets are probably growing faster than the sales at most conventional stores," says Perry Cassano, a retail analyst at CIBC World Mar

kettes what they have to do. And the rare ethnic supermarket knew that very well."

T&T Supermarket is almost universally named by retail experts as the leading ethnic grocer in Canada today. Since opening its first store in 1991 in Richmond, B.C., the company has become the country's largest Asian food chain, with eight stores in the Vancouver area, three in Alberta, and four in and around Toronto. "[T&T] the vanguard, the No. 1," says Scott. "If you're in there, you'll see a really different feel than a traditional store." "The rice may be, for example, multiple

'WE'RE SEEING A DIFFERENT KIND OF STORE: BIGGER, BRIGHTER, CLEANER, AND MORE PRODUCT'



PETER SATO, manager of Gaijin Supermarket—and ethnic grocery megastore in Toronto

ket. "What we're seeing is a different kind of store: bigger, brighter, cleaner. And [offering] a wider array of products."

That is, a store that defies old stereotypes of the ethnic supermarket as dingy and cramped full of exotic items—think everything to customers unfamiliar with a given cuisine and flavor. It also means a store that is ready to take some business away from the three major Canadian players—Loblaws, Sobeys and Metro, which collectively reported for 66 per cent of the country's \$70-billion industry, as of 2006. "There's been quite a wedding out of the industry in the last 15 years," says John Scott, president of the Canadian Federation of Ethnic Restaurants, which represents many of Canada's ethnic restaurants across the country. "Anybody that's business savvy and doing well is very true to the customer, and

stock of whole and cut durian, a pungent and prickly Chinese fruit, as well as fish tanks overflowing with elephant sharks known as gyoza. And contrary to the ethnic supermarket of old, T&T stores average a whopping 16,000 sq. ft., and boast good lighting, spacious aisles, and only the best.

Other ethnic shop owners are catching on. Gaijin Supermarket in Toronto opened in 2005 with a Korean display in mind, but has

quickly become a one-stop ethnic shopping trip. While most of its 45,000 sq. foot store is devoted to groceries, there are also four restaurants, a spa lounge, fashion and electronics, a hair salon, and a wedding hall. And it runs a daily hot parade for customers to visit the store. Now, up to 40 per cent of Gaijin's shoppers are from outside the Korean community. It's a welcome surprise to general manager Peter Shin, who says, "The first reason a customer will come to a store will be clean floors and quality of the product and price. And that's where we excel."

Customers' tastes are also broadening, adds Rob Shaw, spokesperson for Loblaws' grocery chain, which has opened to serve a growing

Ontario since 1996 when it was founded by Indian entrepreneur. "As the global market gets smaller, and our own customers are making the food program and watching the Food Network, they're demanding these products," he says. And that will only increase as immigration continues to boom—1.2 million people have moved to Canada since 2000.

While ethnic supermarkets can't beat the top chains on size, says Cassano, there are a lot of reasons to be learned from these smaller rivals. "Conventional grocers would be crazy if they weren't looking into these stores and watching five, six, seven good merchandising and product ideas," says Cassano. "If they're not going to do that, then they're leaving a lot of business on the table."

Proof that the megasupermarkets aren't willing to give up to the independent entry have been expanding their ethnic food display, stocking shelves with Thai's Indra Foods and rice sesame oil, and setting up sushi counters and moon cake displays. Even Wal-Mart has started advertising in seven languages and plans to hire ethnic food buyers to bring in products for various cultural holidays. "If the ethnic supermarkets weren't taking share away from the traditional supermarkets, the traditional supermarkets wouldn't be investing in buying to get the product on their shelves," says Scott.

For their part, it seems the small shops may be looking to do more than business from the Wal-Marts and Loblaws. A recent T&T flyer advertises some exotic North American fare: SWM and cream salad. ■

EMPLOYEE OF THE WEEK

COP COOKS THE EVIDENCE, THEN REGRETS IT
Capt. Edward Sanchez of the Oshkosh, Wis., police has ended prosecution of the last time he was charged with drug, crime, and being involved with it. The police department's decision to charge Sanchez has enraged members of his city council. The case came to light last year when a drugstore (and presumably Sanchez) called 911 and told a dispatcher, "I think we're dying. We made brownies and I think we're dead, I really do."

Abstract

1

Can we feed the need to breed?

Canada has a baby deficit. Will paying women to have more kids help?

BY LIANNE GEORGE

They're fit. Andrich Marylann would say they positively glow. They're never distressed for time or help, and their kids look like they're out of a photo ad. They are extremely young—Green, Nicole, Gwyneth, Kate—and they're the sweetest 12 to California baby magazine ads. \$99 "Mommies and Me" retelling toy treats, and \$1,200 Happies toddlers have everyone seem not wholly unreasonable for a family of average means.

Despite the obvious fact that the actual work of mothering is no less grueling than it ever was, the popular image of motherhood has never been more mythical. Celebrity tributes that make motherhood look as breezy as Jennifer Garner taking her little daughter Violet down a park slide have helped spawn a multi-million dollar industry of high-priced lifestyle mommy pages, organic baby foods, boutique cribs, designer furniture and junk, couture baby diaper bags. To look at it all, one might think motherhood itself was suddenly lauded by Hollywood. Pregnancy has been fetishized in the genre where right now, designers high and low are modelling their fashions after maternity wear—with empire waists and fishnets that allow to make a woman with even the tiniest abs look showy five months along. Use strange, downy, short as the morning industry is booming, we're in the grips of a baby boom. Canada's fertility rate has been at

a five fall for decades. In recent years, though, it has hovered at an all-time low of roughly 1.5 children per woman (we need 2.1 if we're going to replace ourselves). Social analysts pin it on some jumble of female education and fiscal austerity, secularization, birth control, Serengeti City, a heightened desire for personal freedom, and increasing uncertainty about bringing a child into a world plagued by terrorism, global warming and Lindsay Lohan. In a hyper-individualistic, ultra-consumed culture like ours, another factor, for better and worse, is less a fear of life than just another lifestyle choice.

All over the developed world, the same pattern is apparent: Russia, Britain, Ireland, Australia, Japan, Italy and dozens of other countries are contending with fertility rates well below replacement levels. Forty per cent of female university graduates in Germany are childless. In Japan, where the birth rate has sunk to a record low of 1.26, family planning groups are blaming the Internet, charging that female sites and women are spending too much time online, and not enough having sex.

In Canada, economists and demographers are already among dystopians. *Children Of Men* tagged scenarios. Across the country, women on average aren't having their first child until the age of 31. Elementary schools and daycare facilities, without enough kids to fill the cup, are, as one of the business Ontario's Ministry of Education president, by 2010, will elementary and secondary school enrolment will drop by nearly 100,000 students from 2002 numbers. In New Brunswick, the province's decline has been even steeper. And the economic implications of a disappearing population are substantial, equating to a shortage of 1.2 million from workers by 2030. "For every own people



about to retire in the coming decades," says Linda Dunbar, a professor at Carleton University's School of Business, "there will be less than one person to take their place, which will put significant strain on the health care system." Alberta, B.C. and the Maritimes are already feeling the crunch. "Demography on have known for ages this is coming," the says. "An issue like this takes decades to solve and we're really pushed the envelope on starting to deal with it."

In a quest to hold on to older workers, the Canadian government is expanding the mandatory retirement age in December. But that move alone will not even offset crisis. Who, after all, wants to work a full-time job much

more desired (for babies) but are opting out to—women and demographers are left scratching their heads. By now, just about every country in the developed world has implemented some policy to encourage more kids, ranging from baby bonuses to cash rebates, the numbers fall. Short of establishing a *Handmaid's Tale* regime, they're wondering, what will it take to make women have babies? (And they're not talking just me.)

The short and not very pretty answer is money's issue. Babies are expensive, after all. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2006 report on family expenditures on children estimated that, to raise a child born in 2006 to the age of 17, an average middle-class family would spend US\$260,200 on housing, food, transportation, clothing, health care, child care and education. Factoring in such modern kid necessities as iPods, computer equipment, Playstation 3, cell phones, summer camp, braces, birthday parties, Barbie dolls and bicycles, the Wall Street Journal pushed that number to anywhere between US\$300,000 to US\$1.6 million. That's not even including post-secondary tuition, which many parents feel obliged to pay, a by-product of living in an academic-obsessed culture. None of those costs are essential, of course, but increasingly, parents—working long hours, plagued with guilt and facing up peer pressure—have come to think of them that way.

Encouraging the financial aid for women is the fact that they, unlike men, lose income when they have a child—a phenomenon illustrated with the "yes-when-you-can" policy. In a study by an author, Illinois tracked women's income over time, beginning in 1979, and determined that the incomes of university-educated women plummets after childbirth, ending up at a loss of 15 to 20 per cent on average during the subsequent 10 years. Men's wages, on the other hand, don't appear to suffer at all.

Why are the most educated women post-prioritizing children's costs? says Elwood. "The answer is, it's not because they can't afford child care. They're in a better position to afford it than other people. I think a lot of it is more fundamental than that, which has to do with what having children does to their own economic futures and opportunities."

Demographers at work are no longer a male-dominated issue. These days, they are more explicitly expressed between the women who have childless, and those who don't. Kids are the top priority. According to a U.S. survey conducted by Ann Hinkle, founding president of the Center for Work-Life Policy, only 34 per cent

WOMEN'S INCOMES PLATEAU AFTER CHILD BIRTH. AND ONLY 40 PER CENT OF THOSE WHO 'OFF-RAMP' RETURN TO FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL JOBS.

need for skill of labour becomes more aggressive in the coming decades. "The men that we're talking about are phenomenal," says Dunbar. "Half a million to two-thirds of a million per year. I wonder, where are we going to get them unemployed from? Because some of the industrialized world is going through this same set of problems we are."

But with this odd conundrum—a supply and demand issue in which the supply (women) theoretically have the capacity to

meet or exceed demand, but are not doing so enough, particularly in global competi-

of "off ramps" women needed to join the workforce are able to, and only 60 percent choose to return to full-time, professional jobs. A Cornell University study found that mothers are 66 percent less likely to be hired than non-mothers with the same resume, experience and qualifications. "It's no accident that the majority of male senior executives have kids and the majority of female senior executives don't," says Ilana Levine, a renowned American feminist and author of the newly published *Taking on the Big Boys*. "It's a requirement for the job."

But it's not only women's lack of access that policy-makers are going in there to consider. It's also that, although childbearing is at least a paid job which, at these properly, least in the family, the nation, and every one in between, the bulk of the responsibility for under taking the whole thing falls so usually on a mother's shoulders. Even so we began our planning, birth rate, and the generational future is why being everything about the way we've organized our culture is designed to force women to choose between work and kids—and to penalize them if they choose kids. And so, these days, it's not just a matter of women's access to the workforce, it's the matter of making them at the expense of having things like the workforce for.

To date, women have tried to cope with this impossible framework by establishing a convenient model of work and family. Everything at once. But younger women—who've seen their own mothers getting the shoulder pads kicked out of them in the '70s and '80s—are choosing a more manageable sequential model. They focus again their 20s in career and deferring even the thought of family and kids until well into their 30s. At that point, the thinking goes, they'll have enough cash and job-related goodwill accrued away to "opt out" of work for a few years to raise the child.

The reality, however, is that a professional, highly educated woman is less likely to take that route over the last her 30s, for a whole host of reasons. By then, she has inherited years of life in attaining a certain level of education and career success. She may or may not be married. She has established a standard of living, and is less likely to take the career and financial hit involved in her

ing a kid. "So many women in their 30s, they like their lives," says Dunbar, who special-izes with kids balance issues and authored a study last year to examine the major factors that influence professional women's decision to have (or not have) children. Many don't see themselves as children, but children. "They're accustomed to control and moderation is not associated with control."

Then, of course, there's the physiological factor. By the time a thirty-something woman feels the time has slipped—find her center



DISPARITIES AT WORK ARE NOW BETWEEN WOMEN WHO HAVE CHILDREN AND WOMEN WHO DON'T. KIDS ARE THE NEW GLASS CEILING.

is secure enough, that she's in the relation-ship she wants and is about the kids, and has enough money in the bank—her body may have other ideas. It's another cruel modern irony: every year, as more women choose not to have children, other women, desperate to conceive, spend millions of dollars on reproductive technologies that offer no guarantees.

The decision to have kids or not is further complicated by a dizzying drowse of ideological warfare. An entire library of volumes has been published in recent years, devoted to the seemingly unresolvable question of how righteous modern women live their life. (How it all. Give it up. Hire help. Take more than you need. Or less. Run a company and make a couple of bucks. Stop planning. Have your mother.) It is so perplexing, then, that given such a jangled range of options, so many millions of women would choose to follow the entire order?

None of this changes the big picture fact that demography is destiny. At least it doesn't for demographers. In Vienna, attendance at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis has developed a computerized model called the "five-fordity city" which suggests that the causes of low fertility are self-perpetuating. They foresee the potential for the baby bust to spiral out of control for three reasons: first, negative population growth means there will be

THE MOMMY BOSSADE: *Christie Parsons (left) writes on Twitter and Twittering her "inner housewife," Kristin Gorman author of *Eve Harman* thinks women should shut up and stay at home*



fewer women of child-bearing age in the future to produce more children. Second, young people have been conditioned to believe that the ideal family size is a small one, which means fewer couples will have more than one child. Finally, the demographic will place tremendous financial strain on younger cohorts—who have been raised with higher material aspirations to begin with—which will translate into no kids, or none at all.

"In the next 20 years," says Harman's follow-up, "there will be no one native-born woman in the so-called prime age of 24 to 34 in the United States. The only new work force will come from two places: older workers and immigrants. And most immigrants in nations like the U.S. have been low-skilled. Can you have had more higher-skilled immigrants? The issue is made more difficult by the fact that, among Americans in particular, there is wide regional discontent with a liberal immigration policy right now. [Immigrants] are a world where their's concerns about terrorism, and worries about job competition stressed. So it's a real challenge."

Here is where we bump up against the dark underbelly of the demography discussion: the fact that it's not so much about keeping women to have babies as it is about giving the right women to have them—and to pro-

serve Western civilization in the process. As it happens, the group whose fertility rates are declining the fastest are those with the greatest social and financial prospects. That is, Western (well-educated, if not wealthy) professionals with university degrees. "What's interesting about fertility and child-bearing patterns," says Edberg, "is that high skill women tend to have babies later and if they're usually already married when they have them, so there are two adults to support the child. Low skill women tend to have children very early and they're generally uneducated so they tend to have one adult who doesn't carry very much money to support the child. Neither of these patterns is very good for society."

It's this type of economic reasoning, paired with an underlying xenophobic angst, that is spawning pro-fertility policy initiatives in developed nations around the world. In Poland, where the population has fallen by half a million since 2004, the government has begun offering up a modest sum of 1,000 zlotys (roughly \$490) for each child a woman produces. In Italy, officials are offering a reward of 10,500 for each second child—and even touting with the possibility of paying women not to go ahead with abortions.

responsibility. Who would have thought that the most economically sound solution to a fertility crisis would be rooted in good old-fashioned feminism?

The most interesting recent one study is that of France, where the government has successfully sparked a baby boom by implementing a series of consistently generous benefits and incentives for parents. There is a substantial income tax rate for families whereby the more children a couple has, the more money they keep in their pockets. The state offers a monthly allowance of roughly \$490, which is bumped up when the child reaches the age of 11. Parents are entitled to a tax deduction for an home child care bill (which Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, who stepped down this week, recently announced will be doubled). There are no excessive time-trace system, where parents can leave their toddlers at a moment's notice, for instance. Families with three

children are eligible for a 10 percent discount on the child care fee.

In light of France's success, many countries, and today Canada, are looking to emulate its model. Last January, the federal inter-ministerial advisory committee on the child care

system initiative, co-chaired by former human resources minister Diane Finley, issued a 10-point list of recommendations. Among other things, it demanded that Employment Insurance benefits should be extended from 50 weeks to 52 weeks, and later to 24 weeks to encourage parents to stay home longer to bond with the baby. That would also reduce demand for licensed child-care spaces. Employers should have government incentives to top up EI benefits so women could afford to stay home longer to return to work. It also suggested an increase in child-care expense deductions and flexible work arrangements. And parental leave should be given to both mothers and fathers, not just to mothers. (Diane Gaudet should get a 60-day leave.)

As of yet, the list is just ideas. "The budget that the

government put forward already addresses the issue of child care," says the committee's chair, Gordon Chong, "but our recommendations have not been taken up at all. I think it's extremely basic as financial constraints."

Moreover, the budget follows the current government's principle of giving funds directly to families. (Overseas like France would argue that throwing cash at the problem is an effective means of reducing the pressure on the government to have substantial choice and the assistance of their families, and

of finding ways to get women to stay home, either. Quasi the opposite. In France, almost 90 percent of women work. "What you're really promoting is women's ability to stay attached to the workplace," says Levine, "and the more you do that, the more you let people have whole lives, the more they'll be able to care for their families and advance in their professions. We know that the countries that have the most work-life balance are those that also have falling fertility rates." So far, France's success in this doesn't appear to have come at the expense of other things. According to a new study by the Institute for Economic Geopolitics (IEG), France is now on track to become Europe's most powerful economy by 2025, surpassing Germany as the next holder.

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UNDER FIRE: Van der Leyen (left) wants increased parental leave for men; Julia Gillard, the child-care secretary leader of Australia's Labor party, was dismissed as "Motherhood Minister"

Amazingly, the evidence suggests that the most successful policies have one thing in common: they don't try to pay women to procreate. Rather, they facilitate the careers of working mothers. They're premised on the idea that, the more stable a society places its women's work made and outside of the home, the more likely it is to want to contribute meaningfully to both spheres. In other words, take view of the loss of her child and spread it around so the children become everybody's

or more kids are deemed "family members" and are eligible for zero income tax, heavily subsidized rent and transportation, and state-funded parental leave that can extend for years. They also get free access to more public daycares, and about 525 per cent toward extracurricular arts and athletic programs for the kids.

In only two years, France's fertility rate has climbed from 1.8 to 2.0, and only a quarter of its overall population growth last year was attributed to immigration. It's not a matter

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that Canadian families don't need—nor should they want—any outside help.

In this sense, applying the French model in North America is not so simple. The issue here is not just about economic incentives, or even tax breaks. It's about attitudes. In an immediate sense, North Americans—even Canadians—are generally not inclined to be strapped with other people's problems. "I think the reason is that we're doing reasonably well in Europe, have an attitude that it takes a community to raise a child," says Doubinsky. "The European model is, 'We have to make it possible for those people who can't afford to have and make kids to have them.' Our model in North America is, 'Well, you should welcome a child. That was your personal decision, so don't expect us to help you.'"

The great irony of this model is that we could family values and the role of the urban core, says Brown, and yet we make it virtually impossible for women who aren't independent, only wealthy, to have a home. We expect middle- and lower-class women to work and, when it comes to parental responsibilities, we expect them to figure out on their own dime. Then we label it a choice, so we can say, "If she had only decided differently, she'd have more money, and more time with her kids."

The choice, then, is a non-choice. Whichever way you go, but in fact, most women are forced out by impossible work-life expectations of the elite truly "top" out. The personal freedoms or "freedom" model, Doubinsky says, is doing very little to help the same core women. "Employers always hire me one, made you have a kid," she says. "They say, 'We've got operational responsibilities. If you can't be here for us, don't expect us to treat you the same.' Don't expect to have work-life balance and be promoted and be a star. Women have taken that to heart and they haven't had kids."

The choice is in Quebec, only the most progressive province in Canada to establish a work-life balance support for families. After a slow climb since 2006, the province's birth rate spiked last year, with 92,496 babies born in 2006, an increase of 10,000 births over 2002. This is an important development, as the province has been actively trying to boost its native population since the late '90s, when its birth rate dropped from among the highest in the world to among the lowest. In 1989, the government introduced pro-natalism policies, including a payout of \$500 for each child—but by 1997, the birth rate had hit a trough.

Many see last year's population count as



IN FRANCE, LARGE FAMILIES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ZERO TAX, 80 PER CENT OF WOMEN WORK, AND THE ECONOMY IS SET TO REACH EUROPE'S TOP-RANKED

as the result of new, more progressive policies put in place by the former Paris. Quebec and then Liberal governments. First, there's the famous 57-day child care program. Then, in January 2006, Quebec opened out of the federal government's employment insurance plan in favour of devolving its own more expansive plan.

"If I had to say, I'm going to give you a tip to have a baby, you'd look at the life I was born," says Catherine Krul, associate professor of women's studies at Queen's University. "When Quebec's policies were overly pro-mother, they were a financial threat. But when it started concentrating on really supporting families and giving them viable solutions for integrating family responsibilities with paid

work, what happens?" Of course, the program is by no means cheap, but it's a billion a year. The province is betting on long-term gains.

But governments, vulnerable as they are to public opinion, at least in principle, are easy enough to convince that they need to take action. The corporate sector is going to need a little more incentive. "Organizations will say, 'Well this is all very interesting but it's a social issue, it's not us,'" says Doubinsky. "One organization doesn't want to put itself at an economic disadvantage right now so that other companies can reap the benefit 30 years from now of having a labour force." And so, many employers have no work-life policies in place, and even when they do, the culture is often such that there is tremendous internal pressure for employees not to take advantage of what they're entitled to. For instance, Doubinsky's family found that the average leave taken by Canadian women was only 46 for 57 weeks was only 47 weeks. Only a third

say they took the maximum time allowed, mostly for financial reasons, but also because they felt their employers wanted them back.

But now, economists have assembled a litany of arguments for why it is in employers' best interests to help working mothers. The most obvious is a coming labour crunch in which they will be competing to retain their top employees, male and female. "It's not a favour to women to do this," says Brown. "It's a better way to run a company. It helps cut down on turnover costs, which is so expensive. It helps retain talented people. It improves productivity and quality when people feel invested in their work."

Although the costs of implementing such programs are still theoretical, Janet Gussick and Maria Meyers, two U.S. social welfare policy analysts, calculated the price-at-risk scenario that they call a "dual career and career" model on a national scale on a book called *Gender That Work: Policies for Women's Career and Employment*, and placed it at roughly 1.5 percent of the U.S. GDP. "We might need five times that much money on corporate welfare," says Brown.

Perhaps more important than any single factor in combating the baby boomers' work-life gap had ways of effectively integrating men into parity so that the issue is not merely a women's issue, but a national one. In Canada, at least, the evidence suggests men would be awarded 15.4 per cent of new dual role advantage. If percent benefit in 2005, by 2010, only 10 per cent in 2004.

On the other hand, in Germany, which now has the highest proportion of children women in Europe, the "family wage" are just starting to heat up. Recently, a hotly debated book called *The End of Family: For A New Family* by Hans Eickmann, a former TV news reporter, fuelled a national storm by suggesting that women's emancipation was a horrible miscalculation and that men and women would be happier and society would thrive if women would just stay at home and raise the kids. Meanwhile, the country's new family ministry, Ursula von der Leyen, a mother of seven, introduced a number of progressive proposals, including one requiring men to take a two-month work leave as a child of a child, or in being denied state-funded child support. Not surprisingly, male politicians declined. Even the writers on her Leyen's own party didn't like the idea of being denied state funding for their family. Ironically, they think men have better things to do with their time. Surely men would want to be with their kids. It's not a bad idea.

With Carly Galt

This week on the web

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Canada World Business Science Culture Education

The Macleans.ca Interview: Preston Manning

Twenty years after founding the Reform party, Manning weighs in on whether the movement he started is still alive and what he thinks of Stephen Harper's government.

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Glen Clark: "It's great the government has sought to stop business from taking information. The Liberal bias in the bureaucracy is truly hard to take."



Glen Clark: "It's great the government has sought to stop business from taking information. The Liberal bias in the bureaucracy is truly hard to take."



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BLOG CENTRAL



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Go online to follow the trial round the clock.

On second thought...
Quebec backs out of P3 deal.

Fact check: Child welfare
A leading non-profit says it's not as bad as the children's aid report has said.

Criminal or whistle-blower?
Government worker by day, activist by night, he's looking for work.

Lost for life
A small contingent of MPs is willing to be seen at an anti-abortion rally.



'I HAVE TRIED TO HELP THE VERY PEOPLE THEY REFUSE TO'—BAD BOY FILMMAKER MICHAEL MOORE GOADING THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR PROBING HIS RECENT JOURNEY TO CUBA

CANADA'S STUNTWOMEN ROUGH AND TUMBLE

Cosplay women have held their own in country crooners and Vegas drives, but in high kicking acrobatics? This week, Vancouver's *Angels* Uyeda (far left) and fellow cannywomen Crystal Dulem (above) and Lori Goss (left) are all up for *Taunta World Stage Awards*, the crown of the crown in Hollywood's acrobatic schismata. They are nominated for best fight and best overall music by a stuntwoman for their work on *X-Men: The Last Stand*. In one fight scene, Uyeda and Dulem, who both double for actress Halle Berry, go crabwalking around a house, missed by cables, in post-production. If nothing else, the Canadian presence at this year's awards proves their "Canadians," observes a surprisingly unforgotten Uyeda, "definitely hold our own."

MICHAEL MOORE THE MANIPULATOR IS AT IT AGAIN

Renowned for his inflammatory documentaries, Michael Moore is preparing for the Cannes film festival release of *Heaven*, his new film, with appropriately provocative behavior. Last week, the U.S. Department of Treasury warned Moore they were investigating the legality of his recent trip to Cuba, where he took 10 9/11 rescue workers to seek medical treatment for their respiratory ailments. The trip, discussed in the film, was an obvious coup at America's executive health care system—Moore's target. With typical zealotry, Moore managed to use the investigation to generate hype for the film as well as himself. "I understand why the Bush administration is coming after me," he wrote on his website. "I have tried to help the very people they refuse to"

HALEH ESFANDIARI AN ARREST WITH OMINOUS ECHOES

It's getting dangerous just to be an expert in Iran, as Haleh Esfandari recently found. Iran's foreign ministry condemned for the first time this week that the Iranian American was arrested and hospitalized in Tehran. An Iranian newspaper accused Esfandari, an academic at a think tank in Washington, of spying for the U.S. and tried to try to probe a revolution—a claim Esfandari's friends and husband deny. Trouble started last December, when her passport was stolen on a trip to Tehran. Bewildered from leaving the country, she was sent last week to refugee living quarters, where Iranian Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kasebi was fatally beaten in 2001. This makes Iran's promise to treat Esfandari like other Iranian nationals less than comforting.

SEAN AIKEN ODD-JOB KING IS ON A CHARITY MISSION

Considering he graduated at the top of his business administration class at Capriano College with a 4.0 average, Sean Aiken probably could have marched directly into the corporate world. But in January, the 21-year-old Vancouver native came up with a different plan. He launched www.oddjob.com, a website with a simple pitch: any company in Canada can offer him a job for one week at any wage so he can raise money for charity. Answering the job he's tackled so far are: burger-popping assistant, TV talk-show intern, and newspaper guide. "After finishing my degree, I made the promise to myself that I would not settle for average that I am not truly passionate about." He wraps up his tryouts in August. By then he'll surely have something to raise.

COLBY BUZZELL A GRUNT'S WAR CAPTURES A PRIZE

Former machine-gunner Colby Buzzell wrote his second blog of a grunt's tour of duty in Iraq as a poem through the boring off-duty hours. His online tale ran for eight weeks before military censors forced him to stop. By then, he was beset by Guatemalan literary agents. Even the late author Kurt Vonnegut congratulated him. On Monday, Buzzell's writings, published as *My War* (Scholastic, \$19.99), were the USA's 10,000th book. Buzzell swears the best book based on a blog. "I wrote that stuff right after events happened with my ears still ringing," observed Buzzell, 31. Meanwhile, though, the Pentagon expressed doubt on soldiers' self-expression by blocking access to social networking sites such as MySpace.com, claiming troops use too much bandwidth.

HARRY AVRICH HOLLYWOOD REFUSED A SICK KID'S CINEMA

Toronto ad executive and filmmaker Harry Avrich was fearful of hospitals that he can barely drive down Toronto's University Avenue, site of four major hospitals. His father spent 15 years in and out of hospitals and left the younger Avrich psychologically scarred. But when he did manage to visit someone in a hospital recently, he saw a child struggling to watch a movie on a tiny DVD player. He called Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children and offered to organize a full-scale, 232-seat movie theater. "We have all hours to try to save us," Avrich recalls telling an administrator, seeking to prevent the idea from bogging down in committee. It worked: tomorrow, the theater opens inside Sick Kids. "This is a win," he says. "For me to get back into hospitals."

It always pays to read between the lines.

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books

I read Richard Nixon up close only once. The first occasion was at a press conference in the East Room of the White House. Impressively dressed and carefully made up, he resembled a head waiter in a nice great restaurant that no longer boasted a first-rate chef, personally greeting diners with a pattern of charm to gloss over his visible insecurity. This was the time of the Russian debate about the 1961 My Lai atrocities, involving American soldiers who had massacred a Vietnamese village of innocent civilians. The war hung over Washington like a cloud. Almost every power lunch conversation ended with the same beyond-the-plot—our two different front corners, post-explosive luncheon. "How is hell done get out of there?"

Back at the White House, in the glare of the stage lights and under the assault of reporters' rude questions, Nixon was petting himself, adjusting his cadence, vainly looking for rescue from his aides. They sat there, implacable in blue blouses, sporting the last brush into his caprice, howling, no—stomping with him as he second-guessed himself with recurrent statements that produced tears in just an audience. About 15 minutes into the press conference, Nixon began to sweat; it wasn't long before the perspiration caused his makeup to run, his cheeks smothering his five o'clock shadow. I felt embarrassed for the leader of the free world.

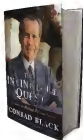
As I looked around the amphitheater at East Room, frescoed with gilt chairs, crystal chandeliers hanging from the Adam ceiling, and the portraits of George and Martha Washington flanking the stage, I wondered how this great nation could have at its head, during such an agonizing time, this jittery leader. Then, our glances briefly locked and just for an instant—a frame further in time—I caught what I judged to be the real Nixon. His head swayed as fast as a pole vaulter's, his neck the look of a fugitive who had spent a lifetime being watched, begging for belief.

That was pretty much the substance of my memory of the 17th President of the United States, until I read Conrad Black's *The Invention of Richard Nixon: Living power through the LIES*. Pages of this compelling chronicle, itself thick, I would guess the antithesis of the Vietnam War, but wrong about the shallowness of the American mind of war. The portrait that emerges from Black's *Richard* war do those in that modern America's most controversial president was a

Conrad Black writes that the disgraced president was 'a great American.' It's a large claim—'but this is a large book.

BY PETER C. NEWMAN

THE AGE OF NIXON



political cynic, "both brilliant and outrageously awkward, of a severity and uniquely indefatigable. And in his premonition he made many of his innermost thoughts and ideas, throughout a very long career, and after he would not go away, and linger on."

I have been in considerable awe of Conrad Black's research methods since his 1977 biography of former Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis, in which he revealed that the opening of the archives on Duplessis' death was not in the customary position. That's deep background of an impressive nature, and he has now applied the same exhaustive quest for detail to *Thick Skin*. (What a coincidence!) Black has the knack of digging up unexpected tidbits to fill out his subject's character, such as the time *Thick* and his wife Pat celebrated their wedding anniversary aboard a Caribbean cruise. His visual highlight was a costume party, with

Nixon dressed in drag as a Greek courtesan, complete with short, curly, brooch and a false brow. (I'd give a nickel to have seen that.) His intent for five-star political water-gate-erasing reading. He once bluffed a senior news officer out of \$250,000 with a pair of fives.

Although he was president only from 1969 to 1974 when he resigned in disgrace, the hefty *invention* of this book's contents justifies labeling a very much longer period in American political history as the Age of Nixon. As well as his already notorious presidency, he influenced many administrations, notably Dwight Eisenhower's (1953-1961), when he served as an active vice president. Again and again, Black gives substance to his contention that "Nixon was the people. He was tolerant but effective, eloquent but not hypocritical, cynical but compassionate and patriotic. [He] achieved as much as any American political leader since Abraham Lincoln, except for Franklin D. Roosevelt, and he did it against his own usually toothsome honesty and limitations and awkwardness. He fought successfully all his life long, and when he died, he was acknowledged to be a unique soul, in his way, a great American."

There are large claims but this is a large book, and what impresses the reader is that Black, far from, allows the evidence to make his case, instead of setting out his own ill or simply declaring his unlikely case. In this masterfully researched and exhaustively written work, he examines the uses and abuses of political power, with the care of a lepidopterist [accuracy collector—*gnat*]. The devil

may be in the volume's details, but the details are also in its grooves. For example, the image of Black's description of the youthful Nixon's dream: "Young Richard lay on the distant stars and planets in the vastness of the night. The sweetest music I've ever heard, and dream of the great world. There was often the scent of citrus groves in the air, but the harsh light of the great satellites, the fierce red and orange suns, the blackness of this early phase of the great trek to California from the East and the Midwest World's loneliness with the Questioner of the Nations and their neighbors."

To Henry Kissinger's rhetorical question about Nixon's emotionally deprived youth, "Can you imagine what this man could have done if he had ever been loved?" Black answers with the claim that his upbringing was "disparagingly intimate but stable and emotionally solid." I find it hard to take his word for it, since Nixon admits that his mother "never indulged in the present-day customs, which I find nauseating, of hugging or kissing her children." Such an upbringing could have produced another Prince Charles, whose wife's angry adult parents to the day his mother, the Queen, returned from an extended overseas tour and greeted her six-year-old son—who was jumping up and down in give-by-shouting his hand. Richard Nixon's youth was equally corrupt, solidifying his soul. He was not your average teenage fashion plate either, walking to school, sneakers blemished, carrying shoes and socks in a paper bag, attending

of a foreigner. While he spoke in idealistic terms, he knew that it was all a bunch of bunk, that the world just wanted to steal America's money and use it. "Not too many years later, I watched the two of them taking up one of the post-annual-Hollister man rallies at the Tropic Club, Nixon, who had just been out of office for a decade and had grown much tamer and wiser since

SUSPICIOUS and ambivalent, he didn't make his sympathetic biographer's task easy



BLACK PROVIDES THE SERIOUS HISTORY OF EACH POLITICAL CRISIS THAT HAUNTED NIXON, BUT ALSO INCLUDES A STRING OF ANECDOTES THAT MAKES THE BOOK A WORTHY ADDITION TO POLITICAL BOOKSHELVES

classroom from first grade on, dressed in a starched white shirt and black bow tie.

Black's own conversion to supporting the Nixon record was nothing short of remarkable. In 1981, when I interviewed Conrad for his biography of his favorite cause (The Establishment Man: A Portrait in Power), he hesitated not a moment before praising Nixon as a weird idiot. "[His] problem was basically psychological and he deserves the compassion due to tick people," was the future Nobel laureate. "He was stupid, nervous, and neurotic, but I thought he had a personality redeeming virtue as he had the mind

my previous encounter, spent a good quarter of his speech printing Black's profound knowledge of American politics. Black was equally fulsome in his admiration for the man he had once vilified, praising him as a kind of postmodern John the Baptist. That memorable evening the two hooters sat at a pair of champagne-upon-ice Ayala bottles, infusing an easy-on vapors into a theology of sorts. No one alive would disagree.

Black adds the best part of the shabby cover-up of the bungled Watergate burglary by admitting that it was the glaring lie on the president's record, even if, in his defense,

it was rarely distorted and exaggerated by the liberal press, which he accuses of "barefaced pseudo linguistic pandering." [Sounds like some classic-sensory] locution.] "In the end," Black noted in his own memoirs, "only Richard Nixon could, and did, defend and illuminate Richard Nixon." He argued both with Nixon's confidante, "I brought myself down. I gave them a word, and they stuck it in, mixed it with relief," and supported Nixon's famous justification of the Watergate scandal: "that his enemies had slandered him, 'that I unpenetrated myself by winking.'"

Black blames Nixon's problems on his racial cynicism, his sensitivity to being an outcast, his lack of flamboyance and absence of any dominant image except that of a man too busy to have shared property. (When Nixon accused John F. Kennedy of being a bald-faced liar, the Democratic candidate shot back that no one who had seen Nixon in the late afternoon could ever accuse him of being bald.) "Richard Nixon was a greatly interesting figure of history because of the constant speculation about what he might have done had his personality driven him to succeed," observed Ted Koppel, a Phoenix-based political analyst. "My impression of Nixon is based on his embrace of racial politics to win the presidency in 1968; Nixon was the poster-boy for this strategy, but by the same token he might have been rejected by the majority of Republicans had he not gone along with it. People tend to be self-serving after the fact. Nixon tried mightily to rehabilitate his image after his resignation but he didn't change his character. He never had the self-confidence that he had good ideas, instead, he tried to outmaneuver his opponents by clever use of tactics."

Nixon's overly belabored negative image all but obliterated his genuine accomplishments. His preoccupation with psychology all but political. Terminally unable to sit like "one of the boys," Nixon was not an easy man to like, or even to share an elevator with. Typical of his idea of how to ingratiate himself with the media was the time he pressed the distinguished liberal TV host, David Frost, just before an interview crucial to his rehabilitation: "So, did you do any formulating this weekend?"

He was one of those unfortunate bastards without the genetic mechanism that produces a sense of humor. Kennedy's speech writer Ted Sorensen once explained that Nixon was cursed with a "bitter moodiness that if equipped him to fight his way with fire and humor with humor." Nixon's work addiction was legend as well. Having pioneered countless times that he would not let his family in a piece but too preoccupied to do so, one barrel heady

BLACK'S OWN CONVERSION TO SUPPORTING THE NIXON RECORD WAS NOTHING SHORT OF REMARKABLE. WHEN I INTERVIEWED HIM IN 1981, HE HESITATED NOT A MOMENT BEFORE PAINTING NIXON AS A WEIRD SICKO: 'SLEAZY, TASTELESS AND NEUROTIC.'



BLACK admits that the Watergate cover-up was a glaring blot on the president's record

create the collapse of Joseph McCarthy's Communist witch hunt. Black writes that Nixon considered McCarthy "a dangerous and rapid demagogue."

Black provides the serious history of each political crisis that haunted Nixon, but also includes a string of anecdotes that make a broke man look like a, if not exactly a beach lord, certainly a worthy addition to political bookshelves. For example, on Dec. 12, 1950, in the washroom of the Bulgare Club, the pug-nosed senator McCarthy had fearfully "kissed" liberal columnist Drew Pearson in his coat, "missing an old Indian theory that the victim of such an attack would bleed through the eyes." Nixon retired peace between them, and declined to have saved Pearson's life.

Another Nixon story Black's book works is that while he has been accused of being the unpredictable son of a gun, he always seems compelling tales about the turbulence of his times. In fact, when together with his magnificent Rosemary Kennedy, the honorable (and adds up to an excellent chronicle of the American Century, now clearly ending with the political self-mutilation of George W. Bush and his shady cohorts.

The volume's main shortcoming is Black's insistence that the story be told mostly through his observations. Clever as they are, by themselves and interpreting what others say in his own words he takes readers of the sound of diverse voices. The book takes off on these rare occasions where he allows members of the supporting cast to speak for themselves. It's the difference between Conrad's speculation about how Roosevelt felt about the sound-day corruption of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, and hearing FOR more. "It's like a bit of a breath, but let's see you of a breath."

One of the book's strongest virtues is the bizarre relationship between Nixon and his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, who almost civilizes Nixon, Black reveals, are Henry Alford. Kissinger and Nixon "were very considerable men, and they rendered great service." Black writes, "In some ways the two men were complementary, and Kissinger was right to refer to their desire to 'walk alone.' But at other ways, they

though, on such others' worst qualities, especially pessimism, anxiety, and an unpleasant desire for praise and recognition, and, in Kissinger's case, the obscurantism of the career. It has been a truism of modern American history that they were almost symbiotic, despite their lack of personal rapport."

Richard Nixon was a great figure in America politics for half a century. The foreseeable Grant gives him his due in last. In a 1992 review of *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst* by David Mervin, which was a revealing yet not hostile biography of the American pragmatism, Conrad Black cheerfully asserted the book as "readily and exactly concerning the legend to the facts." That's the perfect description of his own effort to separate the Tricky Dick caricature from the real Richard Milhous Nixon. ■

MACLAIN'S BESTSELLERS

COMPILED BY DEAN KATZMAN

LAST WEEK'S BESTSELLERS (in thousands)

Fiction	
1 OVERSOLD	1.00
by Michael Crichton	
2 THE CHILDREN OF NUBIA	0.90
by J.R.W. Tabor	
3 THE GOOD HUSBAND OF JUPITER DRIVE	0.80
by Alexander McCall Smith	
4 ON CRUEL BEACH	0.70
by Michael Crichton	
5 RANT	0.60
by Thomas Pynchon	
6 THE THOUGH POLICE	0.50
by Michael Chabon	
7 GARCIA'S HEART	0.40
by Lisa D'Amico	
8 HELPER	0.30
by Barbara Boyd	
9 THE HISTORY OF SPECIAL CASES	0.20
by Michael Ende	
10 SKELETONS IN A BABY	0.10
by Sophie K. Wells	
Non-fiction	
1 GOD IS NOT GREAT	1.00
by Christopheritchens	
2 THE PLAN THAT CHANGES ITSELF	0.70
by Norman D. Stone	
3 THE SECRET	0.60
by Michael B. Smith	
4 THE DANGEROUS BOOK FOR RATS	0.50
by John Updike and Philip Roth	
5 LONG WAY HOME	0.40
by Michael B. Smith	
6 THE 100-MILE DIET	0.30
by Alana Smith & J. Blackman	
7 THE PACT SUMMER	0.20
by John Updike	
8 THE ADVENTURE	0.10
by Michael B. Smith	
9 IN STORIES OF AFRICA	0.10
by Stephen King	
LAST WEEK'S OVERSOLD (in thousands)	



THE CATHEDRAL in the city of Brasília is among the 2,000 projects the Brazilian architect has worked on during his very long life.

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Wolke III, a self-born artist, has installed himself in a Chicago art gallery for the month of May. During that time, viewers can watch him over the Internet via a webcam and, if they wish, they can remotely direct a paintball gun to shoot him. Called *Conscience Transfer*, the exhibit is an amusing metaphor about how easy it is to be killed in old-timey days. The gallery's website says overwhelming demand to shoot Bald often lags up access to the server.



A Dublin antidote to 'Dreamgirls'

One of the original Commitments proves that movie musicals don't have to be phony

They're the crumpey ships of Hollywood escapism, swilled with hotshot and sentimental bleg. *Orangeade* was supposed to be about Mosses, but in *Jennifer Jackson* looked on wedding cake crumpees with *Thyriam* said, it turned into *Amers* as *Wid*, the *Vegas* edition.

Quare is an unapologetic musical, an exquisitely unadorned romance between two unrenowned characters who meet at the streets of Dublin. A character (Hannay), who regards various choices in his life's story, strikes up a friendship with a Czech immigrant (Marketa) (legend-adulter after with the same actor) said a soft touch on the pump. Early on, there's a ballroom number between them in the back of a moving bus. She also shows her girlfriend, and she goes up a country song about a "..." when Richard (Honey, for

But not flying enough. Seven years later, *The Commitments*—which turned Boley Dole's novel about a Dublin soul band into a hit movie with a soundtrack album that sold some 1.2 million copies—still walks like a "sucker guy" who's been betrayed. In mainstream, this would be the moment where the music turns like. Here it's unfairly unconvicted, because both the scene and the song were misrepresented.

Many mammals have bony ossicles

They're the cruise ships of Hollywood escapism, swollen with tourists and cinematic baggage. Dreamagirl was supposed to celebrate Moscow, but as Jennifer Hudson belted out wedding cake chorales with Olympian zeal, it turned into America's *Mel*, the Vegas edition.

Over its unapologetic material, an exquisitely unadorned romance between two seasoned actresses who meet at the streets of Dublin. A butcher (Horsfield, who rings vicious elements in his deli's shop, strikes up a friendship with a Czech immigrant (Marketa Irglová)—whose sister also sees love after a soft touch on the piano. Early on, there's a brilliant moment between them in the back of a moving bus. She tells about her girlfriend, and he quakes up a country song about a "broken hearted flower, a sad-sung guy" which has been looted. In music moments, this would be the moment where the movie turns left. Here it's unfairly unconvincing, because both the scene and the song were uninspired.

Every musical performance in the film was shot and recorded live without lip syncing or overdubs. And the story is a three-chord marvel of a simplicity: boy meets girl, they flower between love and angst, unable to stay together a raging band and record a duet. You wait for the Hollywood shot to drop

but it never does. The dramatic tension comes from an emotional landmine and real-time tension reminiscent of Richard Linklater's *Before Sunrise*.

Interviewed with Harnard in Toronto, Carney said he adores watching *Carey Kelly*, as vintage musicals like *Singin' in the Rain*, but that genre has become faded. "The learning we need now is another classic musical. Think Chicago, I Hate Dumboogie, I Love Atoofa," says Kerley fully self-conscious, every knowing smart-assed piece of work. And The Case against? During a mischievous glance at Harnard, Carney says, "I couldn't stand it. I liked Glenn—in some of the scenes were good. But I've never loved Buddy Doyle's dialogue as far as comedies."

Harvard interrupts: "I revere the fact that you don't like Roddy Doyle's writing, because I think he's a genius. But I don't think she [Lyn] has used journalism well."

So there he goes again, talking about *The Constant*. Obviously, Harnard tells the story of how he got cast over 1,000 when trying for roles. He just tagged along to a morning audition with a friend after they'd been up all night getting high. He was told

You got red hair, you play guitar, you're from the north side of Dublin and you fit the bill. Now Harwood is on the road again with his guitar and another movie: waiting for another break. "I'd be so over the moon if this film did well," he says. He already has a wife (see the special) **B**



MI CHAEL BUSLE...HAS SOMETHING TO SAY
You're a cosmo! You're a washing machine! And you light me up when you're my baby! You're a mystery! You're from outer space! You're every minute of my every day! And I can't believe that I'm your man! And I get it all in beddy-bum because I can! Whenever comes our way / We'll see it through / 'Cause you know that's what our love can do - from everything, we'll see by Michael Busle, inspired by girlfriend Emily Hunt, on the album Call Me Inexpensive

[illegible]

Face it: we're in a commode- based slump



SCOTT FITCHUK

How big is our party deficit? Well, the typical Canadian toilet boasts such luxury amenities as a "hole"—whereas Japanese toilets, some of which cost as much as \$1,000, come with pulsating massage sprays, a built-in deodorizer, a heated seat, a dryer, a bid that automatically rises and a control panel to play music and sounds. The only thing this toilet doesn't do is actually go for you—although sometimes it's too smart, and very unpleasant, to be so smart.

The Japanese take great national pride in their leadership role in what they describe as the "evolution of toilet culture." Canada? Not so much. Our most recent contribution to the evolution of toilet culture was leaving behind the sports section for the next gay And we progressed that in 1992.

But if we're in a more mode-based slump, much of the reason is cultural. For one thing, we're just not comfortable with the idea of sitting on what is essentially the *Electric Man* but without limbs. And for another, the whole "biker" thing has just never caught on here. We understand it but we choose not to embrace it, just like Quabbin with cover crops and *Seahorse Harbors* with bait.

Having been to Japan, I can personally confirm that the Whistle (not's called over there) is as useful as a technologically advanced and emotionally terrifying ultrasound, what with its cosmic beeps. Each and every one

with, intimately sexual water jets. After a brief inspection of the device, I pretty much decided to just look away and pretend it wasn't there—the same way the cast of *Law* does with plot holes and J Lo did with her first two husbands.

Still, these price tags are now at more than 60 per cent of Japanese prices. And expansion on the raw China—with its appealing 1.3 billion citizens—is seen as a huge growth opportunity, especially the country's burgeoning middle class which affords increased

905 reports since 1984, usually on account of an axe being on fire.

Happily, the Japanese soon aware that in some Western societies the presence of hearing flame in close proximity to one's exposed genitalia is still regarded as obscene. The government has therefore launched a formal investigation into toilet wiring. Companies have recalled hundreds of thousands of toilets for repairs. And the citizenry has reacted with typical Japanese manner, patiently holding it for four to six weeks.



There is some debate as to why the Webster issue's taken off in North America. Some point to a shortage of members familiar with the device. Others blame unfounded fears that the robot may spread bacteria. Still others add, Have you not been paying attention to this column at all—these

Japan takes great pride in its contributions to 'toilet culture.' Canada? Not so much.

and he) does not yet have widespread access to the Clapper or Ashton Kutcher.

Indeed, Japan's strange hold on solid base industry is such that global economic doom seems surely awaits the Japanese—if only they can overcome one small little technical glitch: the fact that their rockets keep exploding in flames.

Don't get me wrong—it's not as though all high-tech Japanese stuff explodes into flames just some of them. But you'd be surprised for many consumers, even the moderate risk-offening their tools explode as flames is considered a deal breaker.

The Japan Warm Water Sales Council (JWSC) says it has received 105 reports of toilets flaring or smoking since 1984, usually on account of faulty wiring. In various coincidences, the Japan Council for the Screening of "Holy Cross" has been in the "flame" line also.

ers and, if requested, performing complementary skin grafts.

It's wrong to think that Japan was always so pious about the cause of its collective angst. But after its humiliating defeat in the first and World War, the country was forced to adopt a peaceful constitution. This left the nation's top military leaders looking for a project. Scholars estimate that were it not for the fact that Japan is banned from having a standing army, its warriors would long ago have developed a bomb capable of wiping out an entire city block, clearing away the debris and building a five-lane driving ramp in its place. Instead, the Japanese have a terrifying arsenal of \$10,000 tanks that spontaneously burst into flame. You mean...I'm disarmed?

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